THE

CHRISTIAN UNITARIAN

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

"This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."—JOHN xvii. 3.

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THE

CHRISTIAN UNITARIAN.

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OUR PRINCIPLES AND POSITION.

Two years ago our humble Magazine was established for the purpose of advocating the doctrines of Christian Unitarianism, maintaining the principles of religious freedom, fostering a spirit of piety, and promoting practical goodness. That so large a proportion of its successive numbers should have been occupied with matters of Church Government and local controversy is not to be wondered at, when we consider the exciting events which immediately preceded its publication, and the disputes which have since arisen. It is to be hoped, however, that the volume now commenced may have less to do with questions which have been of late so fully discussed, and that its pages may be more largely occupied with articles calculated to illustrate Christian doctrine, cultivate Christian piety, and enforce Christian duty. We cannot, indeed, indulge the belief that we have reached the end of the controversies that have distracted the Non-Subscribing Church in Ireland; but there seems to be no necessity for interminable discussion, and while we shall not fail to maintain the religious principles which we prize, as opposed to those Rationalistic and anti-supernatural opinions which have recently been engrafted on Unitarianism, we shall carefully avoid everything that may tend to perpetuate strife.

In the month of December a proposition was made, that *The Christian Unitarian* and the quarterly journal which advocates the views of our opponents in the Non-Subscribing Church should simultaneously be discontinued. We are informed that this overture was proposed in the expectation that thereby the strife which has existed between the parties for several years would cease; but the proprietors of *The Christian Unitarian* wisely, as we believe, declined the proposition, not because they did not

desire peace, but because they felt that the principles which they value require some organ for their exposition and defence. Our Magazine was first started on account of the great want which was felt of such a periodical. The weekly and monthly journals connected with the Unitarian denomination were either directly hostile to those Unitarians who based their Church on the Divine mission of the Saviour, or were timidly silent; thus the organs of Unitarianism seemed to give their sanction to principles which directly impugn Divine Revelation, and it became most desirable to publish a journal which might more faithfully represent the characteristic views of our Christian Unitarian church. Judging from the present tone and temper of the English Unitarian press, there is certainly not less want of such a journal now than when *The Christian Unitarian* was commenced; and it is idle to imagine that the differences which have divided our body would disappear if it should be discontinued, unless on the supposition that we would then be at the mercy of our opponents, and would be overwhelmed by their latitudinarian teachings. There is no necessity for bitterness and alienation between those who, under the common name of Unitarian, hold opposing views. Let them only work in independent spheres, and agree to differ. If diversity of opinion justify the formation of distinct parties in the Christian Church, then we hold that no two denominations are more separated by their distinguishing principles than those who accept Christ as divinely appointed and those who reject that doctrine, or hold it to be an "open question." The Unitarian Church in this country is gradually settling down into two distinct sections, entirely separate from each other; the one accepting the Scriptures as containing the revealed will of God, and contending for the utmost freedom in interpreting that will; the other leaving its ministers free to accept or reject the authority of Revelation. It is the former section which *The Christian Unitarian* seeks to represent: hitherto it has been well supported by those who value the principles which it espouses; and we trust that if the new volume may have less of local controversy, and may deal more fully with the great doctrines and great duties of the Gospel, it will not be found on that account less worthy of continued support.

CHRIST "HEAD OVER ALL THINGS" TO THE CHURCH.

A Sermon preached at the opening of the New Congregation, Ballyclare, 17th January, 1864.

BY THE REV. J. SCOTT PORTER.

"The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, . . . hath put all things under his feet, and hath given him to be head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."—EPH. i. 17, 22, 23.

THIS passage suggests some reflections which are applicable to the occasion of our present meeting together; assembled as we are, in the name of God and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, for the purpose of joining for the first time in united worship, as a distinct and separate Christian Congregation, and of organizing the newly-formed Church by the appointment of officers to conduct its spiritual and temporal affairs.

The words of the Apostle turn our thoughts to the great source of all authority and power, whether in the Church or in the world: "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory." He is the "blessed and only potentate, King of kings and Lord of lords." All might, majesty, and dominion are his, and dwell in him from everlasting. All rightful authority possessed by other beings proceeds from him, and is to be exercised in subordination to him; in conformity to his will, and in obedience to his command. In matters of religion and conscience he is the supreme and universal sovereign. Whatever spiritual authority is claimed or yielded, which he has not established or sanctioned, or which oversteps the limits that he has prescribed, is a usurpation and tyranny; and it is the duty of every man to reject it; and, in the measure of his station and ability, to labour for its subversion. Still more clearly is it the duty of every man to renounce all religious fellowship with those who openly or covertly seek to set aside God's authority, by either denying his existence, or impugning those glorious attributes of wisdom and benevolence which make him a proper object of veneration, love, and trust. It is needless to insist on this topic, as it will not be denied by any

one who believes that there is a personal God: and unless there be such a God there can be no Christ, no Gospel, no Worship, and no Church.

Again, the words of St. Paul direct our thoughts to the Lord Jesus, the blessed instrument through whom the Eternal Father hath conveyed to us the joyful message of his grace and mercy. Observe the lofty and affecting terms in which the Apostle speaks of this exalted personage; and how, nevertheless, he traces all his powers and prerogatives to the will of that Great Being whom he denominates "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory." His was "the working of the mighty power, . . . which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly mansions, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world but in the world to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over all things to the Church: which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Christ, then, is given by the Father of glory to be "head over all things to the Church." He has received from God authority, and he alone has authority, to regulate the church's faith; to prescribe laws for its government; to fix the terms of membership; and the limits of whatever jurisdiction is to be exercised by the Church as a body, or by the officers appointed for its orderly management. When any member of the Church, however high the office which he holds, however important the functions which he discharges, presumes to exercise any of these prerogatives, he encroaches on the liberty of Christians, and arrogantly seizes on the office of mediator between God and men, which the Almighty hath conferred upon his beloved Son. And whenever any man presumes to deny the authority which thus belongs to Christ, either by declaring that there was no such person as Jesus of Nazareth, or that he was not invested with those lofty functions which he claimed, or that he did not speak by the spirit of God, or when he endeavours to lead other men so to think of Christ, he does, in fact and in very deed, dissever himself from Christ and from the body of believers.

Further, the words of the Apostle bring before us the nature, the powers, and the duties of the Church, as the "body of Christ," who is its head. It is manifest that in this passage the Apostle speaks of the universal Church in the widest sense of the term; the "Catholic Church Invisible," as it is called by divines; that is, the whole body of true believers in Christ, who exist, or have existed, and who shall hereafter exist, in all regions, and till the end of time. Of this vast community Christ Jesus is the head. But it is evident that this society can neither act in any matter of discipline nor decide any point of doctrine: seeing that its members shall never be brought together till the number of the redeemed shall be completed; and then only in that glorified state, when all doubts, errors, and imperfections shall be cleared away: when the accepted of God shall "see as they are seen and know as they are also known." This is the mystical body of which Christ is the head. There is also a "Catholic Church *visible*," which includes all Christians existing in the world at any one time, as for instance at the present day. But the Catholic Church visible, like the Church invisible, can neither assemble for any purpose, nor appoint officers, nor pass decrees. The claims which have been made first by the Bishops of Constantinople, and afterwards by those of Rome, to the title and office of Universal Bishop, are unfounded and preposterous. But the churches which are most frequently spoken of in the New Testament, and those whose powers and duties it is most important to consider, are particular churches; that is, societies or congregations of Christians, meeting together at stated times for public worship, for the celebration of religious ordinances, for the exercise of godly discipline over their own members, for the propagation of the Gospel, and for works of benevolence and charity. What is asserted in our text of the Universal Church Invisible, is unquestionably true of all the particular churches, and of every true and rightful member of every particular church; namely, *Christ is their head*; "head over all things" to them: given as such by "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of glory," who "by the working of his mighty power raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly mansions, far above all principality and

power and might and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world but in the world to come, and hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over all things to the church which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." To speak of a Christian Church which does not acknowledge this pre-eminence and authority of Christ, is to utter a contradiction. A society which did not acknowledge the headship of Christ, would no more have spiritual life as one of his members, than a human trunk dissevered from the head would have physical vitality. Such a society might be useful for certain reasons, or it might not. I make no objection to persons who think they can do better without the acknowledgement of the headship of Christ, forming themselves, if they choose to do so, into societies, congregations, or churches, constituted on that principle. But I do object very strongly to their assuming the name of *Christian* when they have thrown off allegiance to Christ: for the assumption of it is a falsehood, and they cannot but know that it is so. And seeing that all the world knows it as well as themselves, it would be not less wise than truthful if they were to drop a mask which deceives nobody. A Church which denies or ignores the God-appointed Saviour and Mediator is no Christian Church. It is the duty of every Christian Church to hold "the profession of the faithful word;" and to bear its testimony to the Gospel as the doctrine of the Lord Jesus; to the Lord Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God and the Saviour of men; and to God himself as the Father of lights, from whom the Saviour and the Gospel, and every other good gift and perfect gift came down.

But in all this, the Church itself, and all who hold offices in the Church, must be careful to confine themselves to the limits which Christ himself hath prescribed. No Church is to impose its own creed, or the creed of the majority of its members, that is, *their interpretation of Christ's teachings*, on the consciences of its members, or of fellow-Christians beyond its pale. To do so, were not to maintain but to usurp the authority of the great head of the Church. To do so were to set aside his express command, "Be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your teacher; . . . . neither be ye called leaders, for one

is your leader, even Christ, and all ye are brethren," (Matt. xxiii. 10). It were to trample on the liberty of Christians, unmindful of the Apostolic admonition, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth! Yea, he shall be holden up; for God is able to make him stand." And to submit to such doctrine were to betray our own freedom in Christ: violating another precept of St. Paul: "ye are bought with a price, be ye not therefore the servants of men," (1 Cor. vii. 23).

I shall not spend my breath nor waste your time in arguing that to insist on the authority of Christ as God's messenger, and on his doctrines as a divine creed, (leaving each one free to interpret those teachings for himself,) is no imposition of a human creed. The assertion has been made. I heard it enunciated from the Bench with the utmost confidence, and with much vehemence,—I had almost said *virulence*,—of language and manner: but the absurd doctrine has been expressly withdrawn by the judge who gave it utterance. Nothing but the blindest partizanship could make it impose for a moment on the weakest understanding. Except under the influence of such feelings, it can mislead nobody: and so I leave it as requiring no reply.

I congratulate you, my brethren of this church and congregation, on the step which you have taken, in forming yourselves into a Christian society, based on those principles which I have endeavoured briefly to illustrate from the words of St. Paul in my text: the genuine principles of Christian liberty, Protestantism, and the Gospel. The step has, I know, cost many a pang, and entailed many sacrifices: but it will command the sympathy of the enlightened and liberal of all the communities and individuals by whom simple and unadulterated Christianity is prized. I am sure it will, ultimately, promote your own peace, comfort, and edification: and I trust it may be the happy means of advancing the interests of Christian liberty, holiness, and truth in this town and neighbourhood. To the blessing of Almighty God, and to his grace, I now commend you; wishing you unfeignedly good speed.

MINISTERING SPIRITS.

"Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses . . . let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

Oh, say not they are dead,
Whose forms we meet no more
In walks they used to tread,
Or at the accustomed door;
For in my silent room,
And in the crowded street,
Encircled with a sweet perfume,
Those loving friends I meet;
They go with me, they stay with me,
A joyous, blissful company;
And dear, all earthly forms above,
Are their bright looks and words of love.

The music of their speech,
Unheard by mortal ears,
My inmost soul can reach,
And melt away its fears.
When sick at heart and weak,
A bruised reed I lie,
And living friends, whose love I seek,
So coldly pass me by,
"Faint not, dear brother," voices say,
Like sunbeams in a wintry day,
"The burden we bore, meekly bear,
And you our crown of life shall wear."

Oh, thou who changest not,
These angels of thy love,
Who have known our earthly lot,
Still lend us from above.
While they behold thy face,
And in thy glory shine,
In them we joy to see thy grace
And goodness all divine.
Thy courts, O God, are full, and we
Are poor and few; lend them to be
With us, and leave us not alone,
Till we shall know as we are known.

THE KARAITES (SCRIPTURALISTS).

THE Jewish community, which had split up twice before, —into Israel and Judah, during the first temple, and into the Pharisees and Sadducees during the second temple,— sustained a third calamitous rupture when the Karaites, or *Bible-Jews*, and the Rabbinical Jews declared war against each other about the middle of the eighth century. To understand the rise and progress of this very important but very much neglected Jewish sect, called the Karaites, it will be necessary, briefly, to trace the cause of the struggle and final separation.

The Jews, from time immemorial, have believed in an *oral* law, which, they say, God communicated to Moses on Mount Sinai, and Moses to the elders and teachers, the Rabbins of Israel, to supplement, explain, or modify the written revelation, as changing circumstances or different ages might require. This Rabbinical or oral law is divisible into three parts. The *first* consists of laws *absolutely traditional*, apart from, or side by side with, those recorded in the written Word of God. The *second* consists of laws obtained from the Bible by *traditional rules* of interpretation, independent of those rules of language to which all other documents are subject. The *third* consists only of those laws which the Rabbins, for the time being, have the power to enact or modify. To substantiate this system, the Rabbins appeal to the fact, that the whole plan of accentuation and vowel points, whereby we are enabled to decipher the meaning of the Bible, rests upon tradition, that the sacred Canon is accepted on tradition, and that certain injunctions are given in so concise a manner, that they could not possibly be carried out without some more specific *oral* explanation.

The extraordinary powers with which the Rabbins, or teachers, thus invested themselves, were fraught with extraordinary dangers to the very oracles they claimed to uphold. By secret keys they were enabled to unlock the Bible, and to obtain from it a multiplicity of rites, ceremonies, and laws, which almost entirely buried the Scriptures themselves, thus "loading men with burdens grievous to be borne." Hence the origin of the Sad-

ducees, a sect which gradually formed itself, about two centuries before Christ, of those Jews who rejected the traditions and adhered to the letter of the Bible, and who sowed the seed of Karaism, the harvest of which was gathered by *Anan*, about 761 of our era.

The exact time when Anan, the renowned founder of Karaism, was born, cannot now be ascertained. All known about it is that his uncle Solomon, who was Prince or Patriarch of the exiled Jews, died childless, in 761, that Anan was his legitimate successor to the Patriarchate, and that he was old enough to become the Prince of the Captivity, so that he was probably then about thirty years of age. He was prevented, however, from obtaining the Patriarchate, by the brothers *R. Jehudai*, the blind, and *R. Dudai* (who were at that time Presidents of the Academies), because he rejected the traditions of the fathers. His younger brother, *Chananga*, was elected in his stead. But Anan was not thus to be set aside with impunity. There were multitudes who could not see the truth of Rabbinical Judaism, and they sympathised with Anan in his sufferings for conscience sake. They recognized in him the champion of their principles, and gathered around him as the legitimate Prince of the Captivity. The schism was now fairly created. The Rabbinical party, who had great influence with the then Caliph Abugagar Almansar, succeeded in driving Anan out of Babylon. He retired to Jerusalem, where he was followed by his children and friends, and where he established a synagogue. The warfare now began in earnest. The Rabbinic Jews formally excommunicated Anan and his adherents, whilst Anan declared that he wished all the opposite party in his own body, that he might, by destroying himself, be their destruction also. He prohibited his followers from intermarrying with the Rabbinists, eating with them, visiting their synagogues, or having any intercourse with them whatever. He exerted his great Talmudic learning to show that the Talmudists had corrupted the Jewish religion, that they had palmed upon the Scriptures many things not to be found therein, and that they abrogated others which, according to the literal meaning of the Bible, were unalterably binding upon the nation.

After Anan's death the Ananites elected his son, Saul, as their leader. The latter, with all filial reverence for his father, had the wisdom to betake himself to further reforms. Some things instituted by the founder of Karaism were altogether discarded, being found impracticable, others were modified, and not a few introduced to meet the exigencies of time and place. The study of the Bible, in its literal and grammatical sense, became the chief object, as the folios containing the traditions of the Rabbins were no longer regarded as authorities. The impulse which this fact gave to sound exegesis and philology can hardly be appreciated. The present system of accentuation and vowel points, as we have it in our Hebrew Bibles, originated about this time. The Rabbinic Jews, seeing that their opponents, the Karaites, had made such progress in Biblical knowledge, and would wield the Scriptures as a most dangerous weapon against the traditions of the fathers, were driven in self-defence to apply themselves to the study of the written Word of God. Both parties were thus greatly benefited. The Karaites, however, for a time remained masters of the field. Such was their progress in sacred hermeneutics, and such their desire to approximate as closely as possible to the teachings of the Bible, that they and their chief willingly submitted, about 800—810, to the still further reformation of their doctrines, as proposed by Benjamin Nahavendi.

These several reforms are specified in the following terms, by Salomon-ben-Jeracham, a celebrated Karaite commentator on the Bible, who lived between the years 805 and 900 :—" Anan first came forward and roused the hearts of the men, because the customs of the Rabbins and the study of the Talmud made them forget the law of Jehovah and its true wisdom. Then appeared Benjamin Nahavendi, who, with increased exertions, disclosed points with respect to which Anan had still followed the customs of the Rabbins. Then again, after Benjamin, came forward the Karaites, and made hedges round the commandments of God. Then came men from the East and the West who fortified the law still more; these determined to settle down in Jerusalem, they left their possessions and homes, they

despised the world, and these are the men who are now found in Jerusalem."

The great progress which the science of Biblical interpretation made during the tenth century, and its still more rapid strides in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, as well as the mighty Rabbinical opponents whom this separation had to encounter in these centuries, (such as Saadia Gaon, Ibn Ezra, Maimonides, and Jebudah Ha-Levi), alike tended to consolidate Karaism and to render its doctrines more settled. From this period, therefore, we may look upon Karaism as finally fixed, both in its opposition to Rabbinism and in the fundamental articles of faith by which its followers demand to be judged. As to its opposition to Rabbinism in the present day, we cannot do better than give the words of R. Caleb, one of the most distinguished Karaite writers of the fifteenth century. 1. "The Rabbinists maintain," says Caleb, "that many injunctions were delivered *orally* to our leader, Moses, which were transmitted from generation to generation, till a time came when they were written down, because fear was entertained that they might be forgotten; but we, Karaites, do not believe it. We maintain that what it pleased God to reveal to his faithful servants was written down, as is evident from many passages of the Bible. 2. The Rabbinists maintain that the Bible requires an explanation, and that this explanation is contained in the oral law, but we do not believe it. We maintain that all the written laws contain their own explanation. Where things are briefly expressed, the Bible reckons on the intelligence of the reader. Every expression is designed to convey the meaning of the speaker, else it is of no value. How, then, can we suppose that God intentionally expressed his will in an unintelligible manner in his *written word*, in order that he might give his proper meaning *orally?* Moreover, it is written that "the law of the Lord is perfect," and if it required a supplementary exposition, it would be very imperfect. Besides, any one would have the license to explain the Scriptures according to his fancy. If the Rabbinists were to say that their traditions simply affect laws which may easily be misinterpreted, it might be tolerated, but they go far beyond the contents of the Bible, and contradict its teachings."

The following are the ten fundamental articles of the Karaite creed, viz:—

1. The whole material universe is created, or made out of nothing.
2. There is one Creator.
3. This Being has no form, is in every respect one, and does not resemble any of the existing beings.
4. God has sent our teacher, Moses.
5. God has sent the law by Moses, and this law contains unconditional or perfect truth.
6. It is the duty of every one to learn the law in the original Hebrew.
7. God has revealed himself to the other prophets.
8. God will raise the dead in the day of judgment.
9. God will render to every man according to his deeds.
10. God will redeem his people from their captivity, and send them the Messiah, the Son of David.

Whoso believes these ten articles is a true Karaite, though he may fail or err in other respects; but he who denies them, or one of them, does not deserve the name of brother, even if he keeps the whole law.

We must conclude with a few remarks respecting their colonization, present localities, and numbers. The Mahometans, who greatly admired the Karaites, and were extremely favourable to them, were the cause of their settling down in different parts of the world. They accompanied the Mahometans to Africa, and Asia Minor, followed them to Spain, Antioch, Edessa, and Nice, and settled under their auspices at Adrianople and Constantinople. But although all the Karaite colonies in Asia and Africa prospered during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, there is hardly a trace of them to be found at the present day. In the southern part of European Russia alone have they been able peacefully to maintain themselves. Their localities and numbers in the year 1649, were as follow:—in Poland 2000, Constantinople 70, Theodotia 1200, Cairo 300, Damascus 200, Jerusalem 30, Babylon 100, and in Persia 600. Their present number is estimated at about 4000. Of these, 1500 reside at Djufut Kalè, 830 at Eupatoria, 200 at Odessa, whilst a few are found in Lithuania, Nicolayen, Taganrog, and Cherson. Only four families reside now at

Jerusalem, and about 250 individuals at Nit, a town in Syria.

Everywhere their morality is unexceptionable; their honesty and general probity in the transactions of business with their Jewish, Christian, or Mahometan neighbours are proverbial. No vice nor crime is known among them. The records of the police in Russia show that no Karaite has been punished for an offence against the laws *for four centuries*. Both the Russian and the Austrian governments, as rewards for their high integrity and great industry, have conferred privileges and immunities upon the Karaites, which are denied to the Rabbinical Jews, and sometimes even to their Christian fellow-subjects. It is a matter of fact, that there is no community upon the earth, among Jews or Christians, Mahometans, Chinese, or Indians, which, in point of cleanliness, sobriety, industry, honesty, and morality, can be compared with the Karaites.—*Abridged from the Rev. D. C. Ginsburg's Paper, in Proceedings of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Liverpool*, No. xvi. pp. 155—170.

THE ANGEL OF PATIENCE.

To weary hearts, to mourning homes,
God's meekest angel gently comes;
No power hath he to banish pain,
Or give us back our lost again,
And yet, in tenderest love, our dear
And Heavenly Father sends him here.

Angel of Patience! sent to calm
Our feverish brows with cooling balm,
To lay with hope the storms of fear,
And reconcile life's smile and tear,
The throbs of wounded pride to still
And make our own our Father's will!

Oh, thou who mournest on thy way,
With longings for the close of day,
He walks with thee, that angel kind,
And gently whispers, "Be resigned!"
Bear up, bear on, the end shall tell,
The dear Lord ordereth all things well.—WHITTIER.

CONGREGATIONAL MEMOIRS.

No. II.—LARNE AND KILWAUGHTER.

(*Continued from Vol. 2, p. 415.*)

4. Repairing of the Parish House, and Labouring of the Parish Farm at Ballyloran, by the Congregation.

"Jan. 1700.—This day the heads of families met to consult about the repairing of Mr. Ogilvie's house. Mr. Agnew told them he engaged to the Presbytery that it should be done with all convenient speed. He is told that they will not let him suffer in his so engaging, but will contribute to the work and cost thereof.

"Jan. 1700.—James Callwell reports that Charles Adam and himself looked the timber for repairing Mr. Ogilvie's house, and have chosen five beams to that purpose. Before any more timber be chosen, it is appointed that James Callwell, Charles Adam, John Callwell of Ballycraigy, Samuel Smeally, Robert White, John M'Culloch, Robert Workman (and Robert Murdoch to be with them), shall, on Saturday next, meet at the house in Ballyloran, to see what length and breadth the deals must be, and how many will serve. Robert Murdoch says he will either fell the timber and let them saw it themselves, or he will saw for them. The Session takes it to advisement. Appointed Samuel Smeally shall provide a good strong lock for the door of Ballyloran house.

"Jan. 1700.—The men appointed met at Ballyloran, and think four beams will serve, and seventy or eighty deals will lay the floor of the loft. Robert Murdoch and John M'Culloch offer to fell the timber for sawing, or saw it themselves. Referred till a fuller meeting of Session, and Mr. Agnew's advice anent this to be taken. Samuel Smeally has not yet got the lock. Appointment renewed.

"Feb. 1700.—Robert White and Robert Nelson spoke a word to Mr. Agnew, who gave [a favourable?] answer. He is now from home. Referred to speak to him again about the timber for repairing Mr. Ogilvie's house.

"Feb. 20, 1700.—Mr. Agnew now present. His advice is asked about the repairing of Mr. Ogilvie's house. His answer is, that it will be somewhat hard for him and the Session absolutely to determine anent it, and therefore thinks it fit that next Sabbath intimation may be given that on Thursday next the masters of families may be desired to stay after sermon, to be consulted with concerning this, because some of the people are for letting the roof stay on and some not. However, Mr. Agnew says though he should be absent on that day, he shall be willing to stand to what the major party adviseth unto; but in the meantime, it will be well that lime be burnt, and to that effect it is thought that forty loads of limestone be led by the country, made ready, and led to the lime kiln which is hard by the house. Ten car loads of coal is thought fit to be brought. The town to lead the coal. It is proposed to Mr. Ogilvie what money he would take to repair the house himself. He said he would advise, and give answer

When the heads of families meet on Thursday, it is to be considered how the plowing and harrowing of Mr. Ogilvie's land shall be divided. The four beams are to be drawn up to the house by the town people. To be considered what money shall do the work, and how it shall be paid.

"Feb. 27, 1700.—After sermon, the heads of families stayed and met. There was no time to meddle in matters of discipline, because of being engaged in other affairs of the parish, as the plowing and harrowing of Mr. Ogilvie's land in Ballyloran, and other things. This meeting unanimously agreed to confirm what was determined that day that the Rev. Mr. John Campbell was here, viz., that Kilwochter, the south side of the water, and landward of Lairn, were to plow and harrow the land; New Town and Old Town, with the town of Glen, to shear his corn and win his hay; and in regard that much of the land . . . . it its thought that eighteen acres is the most that can be plowed this year, and for every district and proportion of plowing and harrowing, there are chosen to view the land to-morrow—John Glasgow and Robert White, for Kilwochter; and for the south side, James Callwell, Robert Glasgow, and William Robinson; and for Lairn, Dan Eccles, Michael Naesmith, and George Gasse (?). Mr. Ogilvie gives not yet his answer what money (he would take) to do the work of his house himself, being not yet fully prepared to give his answer, but will on Thursday-come-eight-days. In the meantime, this meeting appoints that those persons following shall consider and determine, to the best of their knowledge, in what manner the house shall be repaired, and what money will do the work, and how it shall be raised, viz.,—Mr. Patrick Agnew and John Glasgow, for Kilwochter; James Callwell and Robert Glasgow, for south side of the water; James Kerr, and John Callwell of Ballycraigy, for landward of Lairn; James Getty, Archd. Murthland, Rob. Kerr, and Matt. Logan, for New Town; Charles Adam and Robert Murdoch, for Old Town. These men are to report their diligence this day fortnight. Though Mr. Agnew be not present this day, yet he declared last sitting-day that he will acquiesce unto what the rest agree upon. It is supposed he will be at home this day fortnight.

"March 13, 1700.—*Thursday.* The heads of families met, and albeit the men chosen had not consulted among themselves. Yet they are desired to go aside and talk a word of the affair about the house of Ballyloran. And after consultation, they give their answer, that they think £24 sterling may do the work, both of dwelling-house, barn, stable, and cow-house, which Mr. Ogilvie thinks will not do the work. and therefore adviseth them to take a second thought of it, with the advice of Mr. Agnew, and deliver their answer next Thursday. The men say they will do this work cheaper themselves than Mr. Agnew can do it, and hope £24 will do it sufficiently. However, they acquiesce unto the motion of taking it into further consideration and report. Reported the land for plowing and harrowing is divided in the several districts of those who are to plough and harrow. The parish promiseth to to make the ten acres of sown land good this year.

"April, 1700.—No account given if Mr. Ogilvie's land be all plowed, sown, and harrowed, in regard of the throng of the seed time"!

* * * *

A singular reason for delaying the minister's work. I fear in "throng" times the minister's labour was left to the last. Mr. Cobham, of Broadisland, made frequent complaints of his people in this respect.

"March 22, 1700.—Appointed that James Callwell, Robert White, and Charles Adam, shall meet at Ballyloran about Mr. Ogilvie's house, how it shall be repaired.

"March 24, 1700.—They met and say that it must be first lofted before any thing be done towards the wall and roof.

"March 30, 1700.—Reported Robert Murdoch is content to loft the house and build the stair for seven pounds sterling.

"April 13, 1700.—Mr. Ogilvie and James Callwell acquaint the Session that there is necessity that the heads of families meet this week about some affairs of the Congregation. It is considered, that unless there be sermon, they will hardly meet (*qualis ab incepto : horreseo referens*); therefore it is appointed that advertisement be given after sermon, that there will be sermon next Thursday, and that the masters of families meet there after sermon.

"April 17, 1700.—The heads of families this day met, and concluded that Mr. Ogilvie's house shall, as soon as possible, go on to be repaired, and, to defray the charges, it is appointed that forthwith a year's stipend (*i.e.* £36) shall be raised, and what is more than does the work shall come in to Mr. Ogilvie in part payment of half a-year's stipend due at May-day next. This meeting is satisfied to pay Robert Murdoch £7 for lofting the house and erecting the stair. He engageth to do the work forthwith. Robert Murdoch acquaints this meeting that there are some in the Old Town who refuse to pay their proportions of the charge of the Meeting-house. Mr. Agnew is to be acquainted with this, and his assistance desired. Appointed what coals can be had now, to be presently burnt. The town to bring them to Ballyloran and to get the lime kiln, and the country, both sides of the water, to bring the limestone to the kiln. The country to take the beams, and the town to take up the lofting timber. Appointed the townspeople shall meet, on Saturday next, to consult how they will raise the money due on them, and who shall be collector, and who shall be bound to pay Robert Murdoch the £7, and to meet at Will. Murray's house. [I fear Will. Murray was a publican, in the modern sense of that word, as well as a tax-gatherer in this matter of raising and collecting money.]

"May 29, 1700.—Thursday. After sermon the heads of families met, Mr Agnew present; and consulting about the repairing of Mr. Ogilvie's dwelling-house, and erecting the office-houses; and concluded to raise the walls of the dwelling-house so far as the . . . will agree; to make the partition wall of deal boards, and to cove-ceil one room above, and to put in chimneys below and above, and window-cases, as shall be convenient. And for the

office-houses it is concluded there shall be seven cupples in all, viz., four to be a stable and cow-house, and three cupples for a barn, distant from the rest six feet, in the side wall, and 16 feet wide, within walls, with gables of common form, division of stone wall between the stable and cow-house, and all to be built with lime and stone. Twenty barrels of coals to be burnt for lime; ten barrels thereof for Kilwochter and south side of the water, for their part, and ten barrels for the landward of Lairn, and Newtown and Oldtown, their part. Limestone and sand to be provided proportionally, according to each party's part. Kilwochter and south side of the water to build three cupples and a-half—the landward of Lairn and the towns, three cupples and a-half. And for overseers of the whole work, and to see to the providing materials, and agreeing with workmen to do this work, James Glasgow is appointed for Kilwochter, James Callwell for the south side of the water, James Kerr for the landward of Lairn, James Getty and Charles Adam for the towns. Sam. Smeally is appointed to speak to Mr. Stannus for the coals. All this work is to be done with convenient speed and expedition."

I conjecture that about this time the minister was beginning to be in wedding haste, being about to be married to his future wife, Jane Agnew, of Kilwaughter. His people seem, consequently, to have taken compassion upon him, and to have set in earnest about the work of preparing Ballyloran House for the bride. The last entry on this subject is,—

"Remember the repairing of Mr. Ogilvie's house, and some to meet with him how to lay out the garden, and building a ditch of stone about it."

The pious people of Larne and Kilwaughter seem to have forgotten the proverb of the wise man: "Prepare thy work *without*, and make it fit for thyself *in the field*, and *afterwards* build thine house." With them the house took precedence both of garden and of field. I may add, that Ballyloran House, which for about 100 years was the residence, and for about 150 years was the property, of the Ogilvie family, continues to the present day much in the same state, externally and internally, as it was when repaired by the congregation in 1700.

5. The Session, or Elders.

Their Names.—"The Session of Enver, *alias* Lairn, from the tyme of the ordination of Rev. Mr. Ogilvie:—Mr. William Ogilvie, Moderator,* Patrick Agnew, Esq., James Callwell, Robert Andrew,

* According to the proper Presbyterian theory of church government, a minister is a "preaching elder," and formerly elders took part with the minister in most congregational duties, except preaching. Now, in general, they only "serve tables."

William Murray, Dan Eccles, William Hare, John M'Culloch, Robert Kerr, Robert Thom, Sam. Smeally, Robert Murdoch, Alex. Millar, James Lyle, James Ramsay, Robert White, Will. White, Pat. Crawford, Robert Nelson, Adam Jackson, Andrew Snoddy.*

THE APPOINTMENT OF NEW ELDERS took place on the nomination of the existing Session, confirmed by the Congregation.

"DEC. 10, 1699.—At a meeting of Session (12 members being present) it was overtured, that there is need of an addition to the number of members of the Session, and these are named, viz., John M'Culloch, Robert Kerr, Will. Hare, and Archd. Murthland, for the Newtown, Charles Adam and Robert Murdoch, mercht., for Oldtown. Appointed Mr. Ogilvie shall speak to them to this purpose, and report."

The following entries afford an amusing illustration of

* When mentioning, in a previous number, Hugh Porter as an elder from Larne in 1674, I overlooked the following extract, which I made, some time ago, from the original depositions concerning 1641, which are in the library of Trinity College, Dublin. I now give it, although it exhibits my namesake in rather an equivocal point of view. But they were stirring times in Larne in 1641:—"The examination and confession of Hugh Porter, prisoner in the gaol of Carrickfergus, May 4, 1653, who, being demanded where he lived in the beginning of the Rebellion, saith that he dwelt in Larne, and that he never was a soldier under any command; and being asked whether he had not lived in Islandmagee, or been often, or sometimes there, in the company of Robert Boyd, James Brown, and William Gillis, saith that he never was in their company, saving that sometimes he had been at the house of James Brown, having sold commodities to him and bought some from him; and being further asked whether he knew where Turlough Magee lived at the beginning of the Rebellion, saith that he did not, neither did he know the father and mother of the said Turlough, neither did he know Phelim Magee, Hugh Magee, Henry Magee, Bryan Magee, Meave Magee, nor any of her children; and being then demanded whether he had ever been in the house where the said persons lived, saith that he was not; and being afterwards asked whether he had ever heard of their being killed, answereth that he never did, for he went into Scotland that night, or the night before the spoil was done in the island; and being then demanded whether he was not in the island that night, and present in the place when and where Phelim Magee, his father and mother, Hugh Magee, Henry Magee, Bryan Magee, Meave Magee, and her five children were killed, answereth in these words,—that if he were, and if it could be proved against him by real witnesses, he was willing to suffer for it, but, further replying, saith he knows not who were killed that night, for he was then in Scotland, yet afterwards confessed that he was at sea that night, and went aboard about twelve of the clock in the night to go for Scotland.

his
"HUGH ⋈ PORTER."
mark.

[I fear, namesake, you *were* at the spoiling of the Philistines.]

the "*nolo episcopari*" principle, which the Larne Presbyterians had probably learned during their temporary sojourn in the Established Church :—

"Dec. 17, 1699.—Mr. Ogilvie reports he spoke to Charles Adam in order to his being an Elder, who modestly declines in sense of his unfitness. He desired him to advise. Reported also he spoke to Robert Murdoch, who said he would be very willing to do any service of that nature if he was capable for it, but the sense of his unfitness made him fear to engage in it. He was advised to take it into consideration. Reported also he spoke to John M'Culloch, who utterly declined it, though with weighty arguments he laboured to persuade him, but still insisting upon the sense of his want of the qualifications for such an office. He was exhorted to take it into consideration and advisement. Reported also he spoke to Robert Kerr, whom he found very unwilling, observing he was unfit for such an office. He also was advised to take it into consideration. He says he has but small hopes of Rob. Kerr's compliance. (N.B.—He *did* comply.) Reported he spoke to William Hare, whom he found very much concerned, answering with tears, wishing he was capable of doing any service for Christ, he would be very willing; but from his want of qualifications, and also the employment of keeping a public house, he feared to undertake such an office and work. However, he also was advised to take it into consideration. He said he would, and go to God for clearness. The Session are well satisfied with the reports, and liked them the better, that they were so sensible of their unfitness and insufficiency, and refer it to further speaking to them by Mr. Ogilvie.

"June, 1700.—Charles Adam spoken of again for being an Elder. The Session unanimously agreeth thereto, thinking him a fit person and will be useful. And therefore appointeth that Mr. Ogilvie, and with him Alexander Millar, and Will. White shall speak to him again to this effect."

The reader will not be surprised to learn that all these modest men (with one exception), on "taking the matter into consideration," accepted the office. The pious publican, who shed tears, and said he would "go to God for clearness," was probably the first to close with the proposal. The only one apparently who persisted in declining the honour was Charles Adam, who seems to have said nothing about the matter.

The Meetings of Session "for prayer and discipline" were held regularly on every Sunday after sermon, and also generally on Thursday or Friday in each week. "It is appointed that the Clerk shall make a roll of the names of the members of Session, and call them each Session," which was regularly done "after prayer"; the last day's absents were excused; those present this day named,

and the absentees marked. If no satisfactory excuse for absence was given at the next meeting, (such as the "storminess of the weather," "the goodness of the day," or "by reason of the Clerk of the Manor Court being here this day,") it was "referred to next meeting to speak to the delinquents anent their neglect of duty;" and on one occasion a resolution was passed, "that the days of meeting were to be duly kept, under the pain of paying two pence to the poor's-box for each day's absence, unless they can produce a lawful excuse." Besides the regular meetings in the Meeting-house, the Session also met occasionally in different districts of the Congregation.

"DEC. 1699.—It is appointed that the members of Session shall meet (in some) convenient place on Friday each fortnight in three districts, viz.,—Rallow Elders by themselves; south side Elders by themselves, except Sam. Smealley, who is to join with the Town's district; and the Landward of Lairn and Mr. Ogilvie is to be with them also, and Adam Jackson; and a general meeting is to be on the first Friday of each month. Mr. Ogilvie joins with the Town's district, and comes Friday next to meet at the retiring house. Mr. Ogilvie is to attend the general meeting, unless some necessary impediment occur."

I have some fears that the minister required this latter hint. On one occasion he is represented as "doubting he can't be present." At another time, "Mr. Ogilvie is unwell, and not able to preach, nor to keep Session"; and on yet another it is stated, "Mr. Ogilvie will not be at home then neither"; but it is always added "the Session may meet, however," or "the Elders met and spent a while in prayer." But although the Larne Session were thus independent of their minister, they do not seem to have ever gone the length of rebuking him, as was done some years ago by a Presbyterian Session in the case of their minister who had committed some trivial offence. The latter Session were even about to rebuke another and neighbouring minister who happened to be *particeps criminis*; but he told them that they must confine themselves to rebuking "their own man," which they were at perfect liberty to do, and which they accordingly did. In addition to the regular meetings of Session for prayer and discipline, there were also frequent prayer-meetings, properly so called, held by the Elders

in different parts of the Congregation. Thus, "appointed next Friday a meeting for prayer in the several districts." "The appointment for the Friday's meeting is renewed, and to be duly kept." "The meeting for prayer referred till Friday come fortnight." "In regard that this business (repairing Ballyloran) took up the most part of the day (Friday), there was not time for keeping Session in discipline, nor no certainty for the town's meeting for prayer to-morrow."

(*To be continued.*)

THE POWER OF THE CROSS.

THE Cross reveals, in a way not to be set aside, that great truth which the world has sighed and pined to know, —the love of God,—shows in the most impressive way that it is no exacting despotism, but the love of God that leads man to repentance. The Cross is the appeal of love, God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, and Christ so loved the world that he gave himself to save it. It reveals the tender interest of Heaven in the fate of the poor, misguided, sinful creature of the dust. Threats, penalties, may be resisted; who can resist the power of love? An illustration best explains this influence. In the retirement of the country, a young man grows restless and uneasy of the restraints that surround him. He falls into evil courses, and shrinks from the parental eye, and he would be away where the counsels of a father and the sad looks of a mother may no more reproach him, and, reckless, he seeks the seas. Far away, in foreign lands, in the concealment of great cities, he delivers himself up to evil companions and unbridled passions. Years pass, and they who loved him hear nothing of him. His memory is in their hearts, and his name in their prayers, but they can discover, much as they seek, no traces of their guilty and ungrateful child. At length vague stories reach them of him. Returning voyagers have seen him in some distant port, on the other side of the globe; and still others return, and their accounts bring anguish and agony to the home he has deserted.

With no companions but those of guilt—the slave and the victim of evil indulgences—in want and shame and sickness, he is hastening on towards his grave. In that home is another son, tenderly and dearly beloved, and he says, I will arise and go to my brother, and it may be—save him. The lost one, when he first beholds him, would, if he could, repel him from his sight, for his presence brings back memories which he would gladly forget for ever. But he will not be thrust away—he strives to unloose him from his evil entanglements—he provides for his wants—day and night watches by his sick bed, and beholds him restored to health. But in the mean time, catching the infection of a sickly climate, worn down with watching, he himself sickens and dies, a martyr to brotherly affection.

In the silent chamber the guilty one sits and looks on the corpse of the innocent one who has died in his efforts to save him. On the marble features of his brother a look of love still lingers. It seems as if the silent lips moved, and were about to speak and say, Return, my brother, to the home which is open, and to the wounded hearts that love you. Come not to this scene, companions of his guilty hours! Leave him alone with the dead! Let an affection stronger than death speak to him! His companions cannot mourn with him, or understand the bitter thoughts, the tender reproachful memories, that rise up in his heart. Alone, through the unheeding streets he follows him to the grave. And when the earth has filled it, there he remains alone. If he heeded not his brother's living voice, he cannot but hear that voice that speaks from the grave. His heart says, here indeed was love! Thy brother died to save thee! Who is he that can resist such an appeal? Must it not touch the soul? Though he has repelled warning and reproof, he cannot resist the power of disinterested love. In the bitterness of shame and remorse, his heart compels him to say, my brother shall not have died in vain. I will leave these guilty ways. I will return to that home I am so unworthy to enter, if it be but in dust and ashes to confess my sins and be rejected from its doors for ever. I will encounter any penalty and reproach, but I will return.

Such, only in an infinitely higher degree, was the ministry of Christ—to recover the wandering, to rescue the lost; and the language of his Cross is, Return, return to thy Father's house; come back to the forsaken home; come back to the ways of peace and the home of love. From that Cross, the love of God, who gave his Son to redeem the world, ever speaks. All the love of heaven concentrates its beams on the Cross. The Cross was raised by the love of heaven and the guilt of earth.—E. PEABODY.

LETTER FROM THE REV. WM. BRUCE TO THE REV. C. J. M'ALESTER.

21st JANUARY, 1864.

MY DEAR M'ALESTER,—In an article in the last number of *The Christian Unitarian*, with your signature, there are expressions that I think have been misunderstood; for they seem to represent, as the only ground of our secession from the Presbytery of Antrim, the want of a declaration that "they regard a belief in Christ's Divine Mission, and in the Divine authority of Revelation, as an essential qualification for the ministry in their Church," and that the passing of such a declaration by "*a resolution, or by issuing a letter couched by them in whatever terms may seem to them most appropriate*," would remove "the ground of our apprehensions" to such an extent as to lead to a re-union of the two bodies.

I admit fully the essential importance of the principle on which you deservedly lay so much stress, but I consider that the remedy which you seem to propose is very vague and unsatisfactory in its terms and purport. Nor do I at all admit that, even in a more precise and binding form, it would remove other objections that are, in my mind, quite conclusive, and some of them, at least in our present position, insuperable.

For the experience of the past prevents me from forming any expectation of the good result which you would seem to anticipate. There could be no principle more distinctly avowed than the right, maintained by the founders of the Presbytery, of judging of the religious as well as

literary qualifications of intrants into the ministry, and of those who were selected for ordination to the pastoral charge, and therefore of giving or withholding their assent to such ordination. This right was, on a later occasion, as distinctly affirmed, and has been exercised on various occasions. Yet this principle was absolutely repudiated by a vote of the majority in November, 1861, for carrying out the preconcerted purpose of admitting a Congregation that left its former Presbytery, merely because that Presbytery would not engage to ordain any person the Congregation might require, without any interference on the part of the Presbytery or any inquiry or assurance as to the qualifications of such persons.

On this avowed principle the majority of the Presbytery agreed to admit the York Street Congregation, and consequently the other three Congregations that were afterwards admitted on the same precedent. There is thus a large addition to that majority that renounced, in my opinion, a leading distinction between Presbyterianism and Independency; involving a total abandonment of all the rules and precautions hitherto in force for securing a well educated and well qualified ministry,—such as the rule requiring from a student or probationer of another Presbytery a certificate from that Presbytery as to the progress of his education, and their consent to the transfer; the practice of requiring further educational exercises or trials, if thought necessary, prior to his being permitted to undertake the duties of the ministry; as well as the practice of recounting, for the satisfaction of the Congregation, at the time of ordination, the proofs that the candidate had given to the Presbytery of his gifts and qualifications.

These rules and regulations are equally beneficial to the Presbytery and to the Congregations under their care. They are in the nature of standing orders. It was in the power of any member of Presbytery, lay or clerical, to require the observance of them; but they could not be enforced on the conditions on which these new Congregations have been admitted, nor would the resolution or declaration you speak of be of any avail for securing their observance, or enabling any member of Presbytery to require a satisfactory account of the candidate's fitness

for the office, before he became a consenting party to his ordination. It is obvious that any such resolution or declaration could, at any time, be repealed by a majority, or resisted, as being a breach of faith, by those Congregations that they admitted on the opposite principles. On the other hand, we cannot abandon the right and renounce the duty of admitting none but qualified persons into the Ministry. Our Congregations confide in us for the faithful and judicious discharge of this duty, and would consider us reprehensible if we were, by our negligence or unfaithfulness, to ordain to the pastoral care and ministry of the Gospel persons who had never avowed their belief in the Gospel or in the authority of Jesus Christ, and who might, at any time, maintain that they had entered the ministry under no such obligations.

I am so thoroughly satisfied of your hearty concurrence in these views, that I think there must have been some misapprehension of your meaning, or that you may have been tempted by delusive hopes to overlook inevitable sources of discord and of future collisions: for it seems to me that the constitution of the Presbytery of Antrim has been so changed that there can be no union or co-operation without a dereliction of principle. Our Congregations are working harmoniously and prosperously together. We have no desire for any angry or uncharitable discussions, and see no difficulty in each body pursuing its own course in all peaceableness and charity, the only obstacle being those futile but irritating threats of litigation that reflect infinite disgrace, more especially as coming from those who were, by vast efforts, delivered from a litigation much more excusable than theirs.—Your friend and fellow-labourer, WM. BRUCE.

[We have reason to believe that Mr. M'Alester's views are similar to those expressed in the foregoing letter, and that between him and Mr. Bruce there is no material diversity of opinion. In the article to which Mr. Bruce refers, Mr. M'Alester put forward the great principle on which the disruption of the Presbytery took place. It has been said that the Residuary Presbytery of Antrim might express their opinion that a belief in Christ's Divine Mission, and in the Divine Authority of Revelation, are essential qualifications for the Christian Ministry, and yet they might ordain

a candidate without ascertaining his belief in these principles. The act of ordination or installation is, however, on the part of a Presbytery, the most solemn expression of their opinion that the candidate is fitted for the office to which he is appointed; and the passing of such a resolution as Mr. M'Alester suggested, would be virtually the adopting of the resolution which, in a season of excitement, was "rejected with indignation."—Ed. Ch. Un.]

A POSITIVE THEOLOGY.

There is a growing tendency manifested in certain quarters to strip our Christianity of every distinguishing doctrine, and reduce it to a mere sentiment which may be entertained by those who receive and by those who reject a Divine Revelation. This tendency, we believe, springs from a double source; from a want of faith in Revelation on the part of some, who yet desire to be ranked among Christian teachers, and, on the part of others, from a desire to widen the terms of communion, and thus add to the numbers, if not to the stability, of the Church. In this way Unitarianism is gradually losing its distinctive features, and, while some years ago it would have been an easy task to explain it to every inquirer, and in a few sentences to set forth its characteristic doctrines, it would now be impossible to give any definition of the term which would accurately express the leading opinions of those who call themselves Unitarians. It would be amusing, if it did not expose the unsatisfactory condition of our Church, to quote the conflicting and vague statements of Unitarian belief which have been given by those who are regarded as the leading minds, and who are looked up to by many as the leaders, of the denomination. There is no man, however sceptical, whom their accommodating explanations could not satisfy, and few so "orthodox" that their ingenious theories might not captivate them. Our faith, once clear and distinct, so that whether men approved of it or not, they could not misunderstand it, is now so dimmed and obscured by the refinements of our sentimental philosophers, that it may mean anything or nothing. At an annual meeting of a Unitarian Missionary Society, recently held, one who had undertaken the re-

sponsible task of endeavouring to disseminate our faith in a district where it was little understood, made the startling statement that "he did not believe the mission of Jesus (Christ) was to teach a doctrine." Thus the peculiar doctrines taught, as we had always imagined, by our blessed Lord, sink into obscurity, and the prominent faith of our Church, for which in earlier times some were imprisoned and some were burned, and for which so many have been willing to bear obloquy and reproach, seems to be entirely abandoned. But let us attach all the value we may to the divine life which the Saviour lived, it seems supremely absurd to circulate the Gospels, and tell us all the time that Jesus did not come to teach a doctrine. What, then, can he mean by saying "My doctrine is not mine but his that sent me?" And what are we to say of the doctrine of God's Fatherhood, and of the brotherhood of man—what of the efficacy of repentance —of the resurrection from the dead, and of a future retribution? Are these not doctrines taught by Christ? Under the great enlightenment that is streaming in of late, and regenerating our brethren, these old-fashioned views melt away, and we are thrown back on the instincts of the human soul, obedience to which, we are told, rendered Jesus what he was.

In perfect harmony with this sublimated form of religious thought, is the agitation which has begun among our English brethren against the use of the distinctive designation of our body—*Unitarian*. To call ourselves Unitarians is, it is argued, to make a human opinion our denominational title, and thus to adopt a human creed! And accordingly the *London Inquirer*, in one of its contributed leaders, a week or two since, contends that the Church should not be saddled with such a dogmatic and sectarian title as "Unitarian." In order to support his argument, the writer turns, by a natural instinct, to Ireland, and shows that, while we profess to be Non-Subscribers, we have departed from the principles of Non-Subscription, by having *Unitarian* lectures delivered in our pulpits, organizing a Young Men's *Unitarian* Association, and issuing *The Christian Unitarian*, in whose title "Christianity is only a qualifying adjective to a dogmatic noun." Quite right, we think, that the religion of

Christ should qualify views of God derived from nature. God has exhibited himself as *one* in his works, and is thus distinctly revealed to the Jews; and many who do not receive Christ are Unitarians; but with the light which the Gospel has thrown on God's character and will, we gratefully profess ourselves *Christian* Unitarians, and appropriately designate the journal which is designed to spread our opinions, *The Christian Unitarian.* But why object to the Irish brethren, or seek, by their proceedings, to support an argument, when illustrations more numerous are presented at the very doors of the *Inquirer*? Have they not in England the British and Foreign *Unitarian* Association, and the London District *Unitarian* Association? and was not the *Inquirer* started for the purpose of disseminating Unitarianism? In Ireland we contend for Non-Subscription—not for non-belief. Our ancestors, in the churches to which we belong, were Trinitarians, and they preached their faith as they held it. In process of time, freed from the trammels of a creed, their successors merged into Unitarianism; and this form of faith they hold and prize; and it would be a betrayal of their strongest and holiest convictions to suppress it, or in any way conceal it. Those who follow us may possibly relapse into Trinitarianism, or they may advance into a sentimental Deism—but no, the principle of our Church is—"the Scriptures our Rule of Faith"; and the man who holds a pulpit in the Church, and abandons a belief in Divine Revelation, is, in our opinion, sacrificing conscience to convenience.

The theological views which men hold, let them honestly profess. Freely admitting that errors in opinion will not cause any to forfeit the favour of our heavenly Parent, we nevertheless believe that all should seek the truth, and endeavour to spread it: and while we gather from the lips of Christ, the teachings of his apostles, and an intelligent study of nature, the simple and sublime doctrines of God's entire Oneness, and of his Fatherhood, we would act an unworthy part if we should strive, from mistaken liberality, to hide our light under a bushel. A vague and negative theology will not satisfy the mind; and the distinct views which we hold, we should exhibit to the world, not in a spirit of bigotry but humility, not

in bitterness but in charity. Those views may be embraced in a single sentence drawn from a prayer of the Saviour —"THE FATHER, THE ONLY TRUE GOD, AND JESUS CHRIST WHOM HE HAS SENT."

THE REV. JOHN HALL AND HIS ADHERENTS.

WE mentioned in a note to correspondents in our last number, that we had received a letter from an English Unitarian minister, informing us that the Rev. John Hall denied having, on a certain Sunday, placed a young girl on a table in front of the pulpit, and set her to blow soap bubbles in the presence of the congregation. We felt it only justice to Mr. Hall to open our pages for any contradiction or explanation which he might think right to give. We have, however, received no communication from him on the subject; but various respectable parties have freely tendered evidence in support of the statement which we published, naming the person who blew the bubbles, also the person who prepared the soap and water, and furnished the tobacco pipe, and giving other particulars which seem to establish the fact beyond doubt. Thus the pertinacious interference of the English minister, though we doubt not intended to help his friend, has only drawn more attention to one of those eccentricities which distinguished Mr. Hall, and gave annoyance to the respectable and intelligent persons who were, till lately, members of his congregation.

Now, when those who have withdrawn from the old Congregation of Ballyclare have formed themselves into a distinct worshipping society, we trust that matters may settle down into a peaceful state. But we have been informed of a circumstance which lately occurred calculated to increase yet more whatever dissatisfaction has been felt towards Mr. Hall and his few adherents. The child of a respectable party, whose family had been long connected with the Old Congregation of Ballyclare, and a member of which had, we believe, been the second interred in the meeting-house green when it was opened for burials, was to have been buried in the family ground on Dec. 30; but Mr. Johnson, who keeps the keys of the gate, refused to open it, and the parents were obliged to take the remains of their child to a graveyard two miles distant, where, by the kindness of a stranger, they were enabled to bury their dead. That the authorities connected with the meeting-house acted illegally in thus keeping the ground closed against those who had a right to inter in it we have no doubt; and if such acts be repeated, they will render still wider and deeper the feelings of disapprobation with which the residue of the Old Congregation of Ballyclare is regarded in the neighbourhood.

INTELLIGENCE.

UNITARIAN MISSION AT CALCUTTA.

THE following extract of a letter from the Rev. C. H. Dall to the Rev. J. S. Porter, lately received, gives a gratifying report of the Unitarian Mission at Calcutta:—

"Now I write you from Calcutta, which I reached about six weeks ago. I fear you will suspect me of *couleur de rose* if I rehearse to you the bare statistics of our thriving condition here. Sixteen months' absence, including a weary homeward sea voyage of nearly five months, and a little over two months for the return landwise to India, was time enough for the whole thing to have run down and ravelled out. Instead of that, I found the number of the attendants at the Mission School increased, and all going on like clock-work in regularity and efficiency, under the headship of a native gentleman, who has been variously with me these eight years, Mr. Dwarka Nansh Singhee. . . . I have many facts to prove that the work doing here in the hearts and minds of the 215 to 240 persons daily attending (216 present this day), is one of Unitarian Christianization. My preaching time is from half-past 2 to 3 o'clock every afternoon. I am going through a course of sermons or addresses on the Parables just now; and my English, pretty well understood by three-fourths of my audience, and quite well by more than half, is vigorously rendered into Bengali, at the moment, by one of my eight teachers. We had to-day the parable of the Good Samaritan. We made out the priest a Brahmin, and the Samaritan a Coolie, in a way that trenched sharply on Hindoo prejudices; but the boys, older and younger, were quite carried away by their interest in the story, and decided, with loud voices, that (many of them Brahmins themselves) the Coolie was neighbour to the Brahmin. On such fits of enthusiastic feeling I rely less, however, than on the fact that they openly welcome the name of Jesus Christ, which many of their home friends hate; also, that some ninety-five copies of strongly Christian books like Channing, and "The Homeward Path," and such books as you so generously sent us from Belfast, including your excellent Hymn Book, have been *paid for* by different pupils during the last three weeks. The last box you sent us was admirably selected,—Ware, Greenwood's Apostles, Waterston, &c. Accept our *very best* thanks."

NORTHERN PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION OF BALLYCLARE.

At the Quarterly Meeting of the Northern Presbytery of Antrim, held in Belfast, on Friday, the 1st of January, 1864, Messrs. James Laird, Alexander Gault, and George Ledlie, appeared as Commissioners from 83 persons formerly seat-holders in the Old Congregation of Ballyclare, but now, by the judgment of the Master of the Rolls, virtually deprived of their meeting-house, graveyard, session-house and other congregational property; and presented a

Memorial, praying that they might be received as a Congregation under the care of the Presbytery, and supplied with preaching till they should be able to procure the services of a stated pastor. The Commissioners stated, that the persons on whose behalf they appeared had engaged a suitable building for a place of public worship, and that they are both able and willing to contribute towards the support of a minister considerably more than the sum required to qualify the congregation for the receipt of Royal Bounty. Several questions were put to the Commissioners by the members of the Presbytery, which were answered in a satisfactory manner. The Memorial, the statements of the Commissioners, and their answers to the questions put to them, having been considered, the Presbytery resolved—

1. "That we recognize the persons on whose behalf this Memorial has been presented, as a Christian Congregation; that we strongly sympathize with them in their assertion of the genuine principles of Non-Subscription; and that we hereby receive them into connexion with the Northern Presbytery of Antrim.

2. "That we recommend the members of the Congregation to take immediate steps for organizing themselves as a worshipping society, by preparing a regular stipend-list, shewing how much each individual engages to contribute annually towards the support of a minister and the other expenses of public worship, and by the election of suitable persons as Elders, Members of Committee, Treasurer, and Secretary, with such other officers as may be required for the transaction of congregational business.

3. "That we agree to supply the Congregation with preaching till the next meeting of Presbytery."

A list of supplies was accordingly made out, of which a copy was furnished to the Commissioners. The Commissioners then drew the attention of the Presbytery to the desirableness of having the ordinance of the Lord's Supper administered in the Congregation at an early day. In this view the Presbytery fully concurred, and agreed that it be dispensed at such time as may be found convenient to the Congregation, by the minister supplying for the day, due notice being given.

On Sunday, the 17th of January, the Congregation assembled for public worship in its new meeting-house. The building was formerly used as a school-room; but by dint of strenuous exertions on the part of those friends who had undertaken the task of superintending the necessary alterations, it had been enlarged by the addition of nearly one-half to its former length, repaired, and fitted up with everything needful for the celebration of public worship. Instead of pews, which would occupy more space than can be spared, neat benches, with supports for the back, have been provided. The pulpit is remarkably elegant, as well as commodious. The house affords sitting-room for about 180 persons; and, when some farther alterations (which there was no time to execute before the day of opening) shall be completed, will accommodate a congregation of more than 200. It also admits of enlargement as soon as it shall be found necessary.

Agreeably to the appointment of Presbytery, the Rev. J. Scott

Porter attended and conducted the services of the day. The occasion being one on which a good deal of business, strictly congregational, had to be transacted, no advertisements had been issued, nor any exertions made to invite the attendance of persons not belonging to the congregation; and few, if any, besides its own members were present; nevertheless the place of meeting was well filled, not more than twelve or fifteen sittings being vacant. At the close of his sermon, Mr. Porter read over the minutes of the last meeting of the Northern Presbytery relating to the New Congregation, and inquired whether any steps had been taken to carry out the recommendations then given? Mr. Ledlie then handed in a book containing a stipend-list, the heading to which stated that "the undersigned enrolled themselves as members of the Congregation of Ballyclare in connexion with the Northern Presbytery of Antrim, and promised to contribute annually, as stipend for the support of a minister, the sums opposite to their names respectively." The list contained the names of eighty *bonâ fide* heads of families, together with the stipend payable by each, amounting in all to £66 2s. 6d. per annum; the names and sums being all in the handwriting of the contributors themselves, with the exception of one name, that of a respected lady, who had authorized one of her relatives to sign for her. At Mr. Porter's request, Mr. Ledlie read aloud, slowly and deliberately, the entire list from beginning to end. He also stated that there were ten or twelve persons besides, whose sympathies were warmly with this Congregation, and of whose zealous co operation no doubt could be entertained; but whose names did not appear in the list, owing to their being absent from home when called upon for their signatures. Altogether there was little doubt that the Congregation would at least consist of ninety families; and that for the next three years, (having some funds available for the purpose,) they would be able to contribute not less than £80 per annum towards their minister's stipend.

The next matter brought forward was the name by which the Congregation should be called. The "*Northern Congregation of Ballyclare*," the "*New Unitarian Congregation of Ballyclare*," and "*The Northern Presbyterian Congregation of Ballyclare*," were severally suggested. After a short and most amicable discussion, the first two were withdrawn, and the third unanimously adopted. A body of rules for the transaction of congregational business was then brought forward; and, after careful consideration, was, in like manner, adopted unanimously, with a few verbal amendments. A resolution was then proposed, seconded, and unanimously agreed to, to the effect that, "while we rejoice in the connexion which has been formed between this Congregation and the Northern Presbytery of Antrim, and while we are grateful to that Reverend Body for its compliance with the prayer of the memorial presented on our behalf, we deem it proper, at the commencement of our existence as a distinct Congregation, to declare that we reserve to ourselves and to our successors the right of withdrawing from that Presbytery, or from any other with which our Congregation may, for the time being, be connected, and of joining any other religious body, or remaining distinct and separate from all

ecclesiastical associations whatsoever, whenever it shall seem to the Congregation, duly convened, proper to do so: with, or without the concurrence or sanction of the minister of the Congregation for the time being." A Session consisting of six Elders, viz., Alexander Woodside, Alexander Gault, James Laird, Hugh Gillespie, Samuel Dundee, jun., and William Simms, was then chosen; also, a Committee of twelve members, (of whom four are to vacate annually), a Treasurer, a Secretary, and a Collector of Stipend. A proposal was brought forward for organizing a Sunday School; the propriety and expediency of the measure were cordially approved, but as the meeting had been unavoidably protracted, and many members of the Congregation had considerable distances to travel before reaching their homes, it was thought best to postpone the consideration of that subject till a future Lord's Day, after public notice.

The Rev. J. Scott Porter then delivered a short address to the officers who had been appointed, and to the Congregation. He congratulated all present on the harmony which had prevailed during the whole proceedings of the meeting, and which afforded a happy omen of future prosperity and usefulness. He adverted to the zeal and energy which had been shewn in preparing the business that had been brought forward. Considerable time and thought must have been devoted to the preparation of the draught of rules which they had adopted. The enlargement, alteration, and fitting up of the place in which they were then assembled reflected great credit on the gentlemen who had taken that matter in hand; but most of all must have been the exertions made in procuring the personal signatures of the eighty persons who had enrolled themselves as members and stipend-payers. In a widely scattered congregation, with so many things continually occurring to call farmers and others away from their homes, the labour of procuring the eighty signatures now appended to that list, in the space of a fortnight, must have been very great. The list shewed not merely the zeal of those who had taken charge of it, but the readiness with which they had been met; for if it had been necessary to argue the point with the persons applied to, the work could not have been completed. Here was a decisive answer to the assertions of those who had written over to ministers and others in England, that of the list of adherents to the Northern Presbytery formerly published, "*two-thirds* were fictitious;"—that "at least *fifty-six* were spurious:" and other statements of the same kind, which only reflect disgrace upon their authors. Mr. Porter exhorted the Session, Committee, and other office-bearers, to the faithful discharge of their duties; and reminded the Congregation that they were not to consider themselves as having done their part when they had enrolled their names and appointed officers. On the contrary, every individual was to consider himself as bound to take a warm interest in the prosperity of the Society, and to contribute to its honour, usefulness, and enlargement, by all fair and manly Christian efforts, so far as God might furnish opportunity and means. An appropriate hymn was then sung, and the proceedings were closed with prayer.

STANHOPE STREET DOMESTIC MISSION, BELFAST.

The annual soiree in connection with this institution was held on Friday evening, Jan. 8th. Tea was served in the two spacious School-rooms, each of which was well filled,—the lower room by the children, and the upper by the adults. After tea, all assembled in the upper School-room, which was much crowded. The Rev. T. Bowring having been moved to the chair, gave out a hymn, and after some brief remarks on the present aspect of the meeting, called on the Rev. C. J. M'Alester, who, in a few sentences, drew the attention of the children to the advantages they enjoyed in connexion with the mission, and urged on them the duty of giving heed to the instructions which were imparted both in the day and the Sunday Schools. He also referred to the great misery which intemperance produced, and recommended a cheap and sure means of guarding against it. There was then uncovered, to the admiration of the juvenile part of the meeting, a Christmas tree splendidly lit up,—its branches loaded with all manner of good things—apples, oranges, and sweetmeats, with toys of every kind. The gathering of the fruits of this tree was entrusted to the Rev. J. S. Porter, who distributed them to the expecting children, accompanying each gift with some happy remark. Some suitable hymns were sung by the girls of the Sunday School. The proceedings, which were throughout of the most pleasing character, were terminated with the Lord's prayer and the benediction.

Congregational Soiree at Comber.—On Tuesday evening, Jan. 19th, a Soiree was held in the Remonstrant Meeting-house, Comber. About 400 persons, members of the Congregation, and friends connected with other communions, attended. The meeting-house was tastefully decorated with evergreens, and several appropriate mottoes adorned the walls. After tea, on the motion of Surgeon Frame, John Andrews, Esq., J.P., took the chair, and introduced the proceedings of the evening by some judicious and appropriate remarks. "Religious Liberty" was spoken to by Rev. J. Berryhill; "Non-Sectarian Education," by Rev. C. J. M'Alester; "Christianity not a Creed," by Rev. J. Porter; "Unity of Spirit amid Differences of Opinion," by Rev. S. C. Nelson; "Our English Brethren," by Rev. W. O. M'Gowan; and "Sunday Schools," by Rev. John Orr. Surgeon Frame was moved to the second chair, and the cordial thanks of the meeting given by acclamation to Mr. Andrews for his kindness in presiding, and for the interest he has taken from its commencement in the Remonstrant Congregation of Comber. In the course of the evening, a variety of hymns and anthems were most creditably sung by the congregational choir.

Hope Street Church, Liverpool.—The induction of the Rev. A. Gordon as co-minister with the Rev. C. Wicksteed, of the Hope Street Congregation, took place on Thursday, December 31st. The devotional services were conducted by the Rev. C. Wicksteed, and the Rev. J. Martineau delivered the charge to the minister and people. The Rev. J. H. Thom, in his own name and that of the other fellow-labourers in the churches which now formed Mr. Gordon's household of faith, tendered to him the right hand of fellow-

ship. Mr. Gordon made an impressive statement, setting forth the principles and aims with which he undertook the work to which he had been appointed The services were closed with singing, and a prayer offered by the Rev. J. Martineau. In the evening a soiree was held in the school-room, at which a large number of ladies and gentlemen attended. Mr. C. M. King occupied the chair

OBITUARY.

Died, at Larne, on January 9th, Thomas Kirkpatrick, Esq., aged 55 years.

Died, at Holywood, on January 18th, Miss Eliza Parker, aged 63 years.

Died, at Bray, on January 10th, Jane, relict of the late Mr. Andrew Clokey, aged 65 years.

Communications for the Editor, to be addressed by post to Rev. C. J. M'Alester, Holywood; or, otherwise, to 45, Arthur Street, Belfast.

[ADVERTISEMENT.]

THE NORTHERN PRESBYTERY OF ANTRIM AND THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS.

AT A MEETING OF THE NORTHERN PRESBYTERY of Antrim, held in Belfast, on Friday, the 3rd of July, 1863, attention was called to certain expressions contained in a newspaper report of observations made by the MASTER of the ROLLS at the close of the hearing of the cause of "The Attorney-General *v.* the Rev. John Hall and others," which seemed to convey a charge of falsehood against the Ministers of the above-named Presbytery who had filed an affidavit on behalf of the Relators; but it was judged advisable not to take any step in reference to the matter until his HONOR'S Judgment should be given in writing, as promised, and published in an authentic shape.

At a meeting of the same Presbytery, held on the 1st of January, 1864, his HONOR'S written Judgment, as printed manifestly from his own notes and with his sanction, having been laid before the Presbytery and considered, it was

Resolved unanimously—"That, inasmuch as his HONOR, in preparing this his deliberate and carefully-revised Judgment, has seen cause to abstain from the offensive language contained in the newspaper report of his extemporaneous remarks, we consider the charge of falsehood, if such was made, as now virtually withdrawn, and agree to take no further notice of the matter."

(Signed),

W. BRUCE, *Moderator of the Northern Presbytery of Antrim.*

J. SCOTT PORTER, *Clerk.*

THE

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THE TWO SCHOOLS.

As in the Church by law established, we find various sections distinctly marked, as the Broad Church and the Narrow, the High Church and the Low, so in our Unitarian denomination, distinguished though it has always been for the broad ground which it takes, and the liberal principles it has consistently maintained, there have latterly appeared two parties, holding opposite views respecting the authority of Christ and his Gospel, and sometimes spoken of as "the Two Schools." To the leading opinions which characterize each of these Schools we invite the attention of our readers.

The Old School in the Unitarian Church is represented by the honoured names of Milton, Locke, and Newton; of Priestley, Price, and Lindsay; of Channing, Ware, and Peabody; of Carpenter, Armstrong, and Aspland. It has uniformly maintained the divine authority of Revelation, has contended for the Divine Mission of the Saviour, has vindicated the truth of miracles, and expressly argued for the reality of our Lord's Resurrection. When, from time to time, a sceptical spirit has arisen, as at the era of the French Revolution in the latter part of the last century, Unitarians have been among the most earnest and most successful defenders of "the faith once delivered to the saints;" and many, who rejected the Unitarian doctrine, have been glad to draw from the Unitarian armoury the weapons with which they met the assaults of Deism. We believe we are correct in stating that no Christian Church can, in proportion to its numbers, boast of a richer catalogue of martyrs and confessors, scholars, historians, patriots, and philanthropists; while in the humbler walks of life, in active duty, in

temptation, and in affliction, the Unitarian has manifested a faith as strong and as consolatory as the disciples of any other Church. Nor need we be surprised at the elevating and practical influences which flow from the Gospel as interpreted by Unitarians. While they reject interpretations of Scripture which clash with common sense, or tend to impugn the justice, and limit the mercy of our heavenly Father, they retain every thing that is ennobling, sanctifying, and comforting in other Churches. They rest in the doctrine of God's Fatherhood; they put implicit faith in Jesus as the Christ, sent and sealed by God, and therefore they receive his doctrine, and believe in his promises; they see in his death the accomplishment of God's purposes for the redemption of the world, and in his resurrection, a victory over death and a pledge of immortality. There is no truth of Scripture which they do not receive, no promise to which they do not cling: and their religious system is formed, not by casting aside the authority of the Bible, but by applying the reasoning powers that God has bestowed on his human children, in the interpretation of that volume which is given for their instruction, guidance, and salvation. On various points among the Unitarians of the Old School there has been a diversity of opinion, as on the nature of Christ, the duration of future punishment, and the character of the Holy Spirit; but respecting the leading doctrines of the Gospel, as well as its authority, they have been of one mind.

The New School of Unitarians is of very recent growth, having sprung up within the last few years. It may be considered as having been inaugurated in America by the teachings and writings of the late Theodore Parker, whose manly and consistent life, philanthropic spirit, and unflagging zeal in the cause of emancipation, much more than his theology, attracted many to his lecture-room in Boston, and gained for him much popularity. In England, we believe that Mr. Taylor of Glasgow was the first minister that broached the doctrines of the New School, but so obnoxious were they to the members of the Unitarian Church there, that he was presently required to resign his pulpit, a small minority following him to a lecture-room in some obscure part of the city, and in a little time he withdrew from the ministry. Finsbury

Chapel, London, was for a length of time the only place in which the New School doctrines were preached; and perhaps there are few Unitarian pulpits in England or America in which "with boldness" the disciples of this School can yet proclaim their opinions; but there is no doubt that the public preaching of many is impregnated with the doctrines of the school; and so rapidly and so widely have they been diffused through the denomination in England, that there are, we believe, few of the ministers of the Unitarian Church in that country that have not been "toned down" to regard them with complacence. The characteristic views of this New School are easily expressed. The Christian Miracles are regarded as only fabulous, and the Resurrection of Christ as a mere delusion; the mission of the Saviour is considered as in no sense divine, and the idea of Inspiration is repudiated as absurd. Sometimes, indeed, as if to take the edge off their system and prevent it from wounding weak minds, they will tell you that Jesus was *inspired*, but it will turn out, as you talk with them, that they regard all men as *inspired* more or less, and that great minds, like Shakspeare and Walter Scott, Thackeray and Dickens, have been inspired to a greater degree; and thus, though perhaps they may say in a still higher degree, Jesus of Nazareth was inspired. Their system, stripped of the vague terms in which they conceal it, is simply this,—the religious views that are contained in the Scriptures are merely the result of human reflection and experience, and possess no more than human authority; they may be right or they may be wrong; and so Parker, speaking out his honest sentiments, declared to those whom he addressed," "*Christ is no Master for you or me.*" One Unitarian minister in England has been heard to declare that the religion of Christ, though admirably suited for the people of the East eighteen hundred years ago, is not a religion adapted for this age of higher civilization; and another minister has been known to say that there is no reason why the Bible should be used on the Sunday in the pulpit, rather than other books containing important instruction. We are not acute philosophers, and we may not be able to discern distinctions that are plain enough to minds trained in German lore, but we believe that the

simple distinction between the Old School and the New is, that the former is Christianity, and the latter Deism.

It may be thought by some that we have erred in our classification ; as there is really a Third School, embracing those who believe in Christ's Divine Mission, in his miracles and resurrection, and in the authority of Revelation, but who regard them as unimportant matters. It is true that there are many of this class, some here, and many more in England, who profess to believe in the supernatural, but who regard the question at issue as of little moment, and who, in a spirit of enlarged liberality for which some loudly commend them, seek to combine the two Schools on the basis of "free inquiry." We confess we have no faith in a Third School, and we do not desire to recognize it at all. Those who are not with us in maintaining the divine in Christianity are against us ; they consent to lower the standard of the Gospel to a human level, patiently submit to see it insulted by their "brethren," and thus, as we think, betray the cause of Christ. To regard as unimportant the supernatural and divine in Christianity, is to abandon these elements in our religion altogether : for let us suppose that an effort is made by this New School and their liberal apologists and *confreres*, to propagate religion among the ignorant and depraved, they will not, we presume, hold the ridiculous and absurd position that a Missionary Society some time ago presented in the North of England, which welcomed to its ranks, and enrolled as its missionaries, all comers, and "did not ask what their opinions were." They must, therefore, in consistency take only common ground, and thus they must lay aside all but the human element in the Gospel, and propagate nothing but Deism, though under the name of Christianity, for the instruction and reformation of the people. It was not thus the Saviour taught, nor thus did the apostles preach, when they proclaimed Jesus Christ "the power of God and the wisdom of God." The silent influence of the New School on those who in any way league themselves with it, is remarkable : it tempts them to throw into abeyance all that is supernatural, and dwell chiefly on the instincts of the soul, and the laws of nature : and while they proclaim at times, freely enough, their belief in Christ's miracles, and

in the authority of Scripture, you will find them, in the solemn season of death, talk to the surviving friends of the prevailing belief held by heathen and Christian in a future life, of the more rational views of the spirit-land entertained by Christians, of the teachings of Jesus who was gifted with so much insight into the human and divine, of the doctrine of a future existence being taught in his life and death; but of "Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept," they do not utter a syllable. Strange that the great doctrine which permeates the whole Gospel, which, in reference to life struggles as well as death scenes, is the theme of the apostle's most earnest teaching, should, under the influence of the New School, fade away! If the essential difference of their principles did not divide the Old School and the New, this paralysing influence which the latter exercises over all that come into its society, should be enough to keep aloof from it those who value the divine in Christianity; and we therefore hope and strive that the Two Schools shall separate into Two Denominations.

RETURNING HOME.

The parable of the Prodigal Son sets forth by striking analogies a comprehensive and most attractive theology. It does not merely illustrate the nature and conditions of the Divine forgiveness,—a subject which comes home with painful questionings to every awakened mind. It does more. The whole history of our wanderings and returnings is here presented at one view. No one of any religious experience fails to see that experience here mirrored forth and touching a thousand chords of memory. The stages through which we pass, as we roam away from God and come home again, are all presented with singular distinctness, and in imagery ever dear to human affections. It is well that human nature and experience can be studied on a page so divinely illumined. We can understand, with this page before us, why our Lord spake in parables, instead of working out a system of dogmatic theology. His doctrines cannot now be so mis-

understood, or so clouded with metaphysics, that we may not recover them at once. They live in the language of the heart, and the language of our daily life, and in all the imagery of our homes and firesides. Following the order of the narrative, we will attempt nothing more than such plain exposition as shall evolve the simple truths it contains.

The first period in the prodigal's history is the time during which he lived at home. There and then were stored up in his mind the sweet remembrances of childhood, and all the hallowed associations of early affection. He tended his father's flock, and drove them from pasture to pasture, innocent as the lambkins that gambolled before him over the hills. Such was the employment of the children of an Eastern patriarch. The first years passed away pure as the naked skies above, and the fields that surrounded the place of home were clothed in the peaceful remembrances of that early innocence. How fit to represent our condition, ere any of our wanderings have begun! How does it correspond to that first period in every one's life, which glows far back in the domains of memory, when as yet there was no conscious and voluntary transgression of the Divine command! The child is at home in the Father's house. I do not mean to broach here any theory about human nature. I know very well that the seeds of depravity are with us at the beginning; but as yet they sleep undeveloped. And so we say the child is at home in the Father's house; for heaven lies about him, and the faces of good angels look through his crystalline innocence.

Next comes the period of responsibility. "Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." The period of his minority now closes, and he demands and receives his inheritance. This answers entirely to that epoch in man's spiritual life when he comes into full possession of his rational and moral powers, and uses them as his own. The child grows up and receives an earthly inheritance from his parent. We receive a spiritual heritage from the Great Parent of all,—these possessions of mind and heart and soul, this wealth of reason, affection, and moral power. At first the child acts under guardians, and they are responsible for his conduct. When manhood dawns,

he is free; he acts for himself; his possessions are at his own disposal. So it is with our moral possessions. Others reason for us, and choose and act for us; but when reason and the power of choice are fully unfolded, they become ours. They are our Father's portion that falleth to us, our immortal inheritance for weal or woe.

Then the two great and solemn alternatives present themselves. How shall we use the goods that fall to us? How anxiously does the parent watch his child, to see how he will use the worldly possessions he has given him! Will he put them to good account, and increase them tenfold, or will he squander them for his pleasure and amusement? Even so is the eye of the Great Parent on the child just coming into the free use and possession of his heaven-born faculties. Will this wealth of mind and heart, coined from the eternal reason and love, be sacredly used and increased, or squandered and cast ingloriously away?

Then comes the period of wrong choosing. There is a time when a man begins to sin, and it is when the first conscious and deliberate wrong choice is made; the first time, after the period of full responsibility, when we know the right and choose the wrong. This is the first step taken away from the Father's house. Unless we had taken another and another, we should remember that first step as an epoch in our being like that of the first sin which entered Paradise. It is when these powers, freshly received from the Divine Giver, are employed for selfish ends, and not devoted unto Him who gave them. This is wasting our substance. It is using this immortal heritage for ignoble purposes. The man who uses his powers for God finds that they enlarge and brighten in the using. The man who uses them merely for his own pleasure and appetite finds that they fall away in the using, and are soiled and wasted.

And how has he wandered now into a far country, and what dreary spaces lie between him and the God of his innocent years! How impressively, in the language of Scripture analogy, is the state of the blest described as being "nearness unto God," while that of the lost is described as being away from God, or travelling into a

far country! The words of the hymn are the language of our inward experience:—

"My Father's house on high,
Home of my soul! how near
At times to faith's foreseeing eye
Thy golden gates appear!"

But sin is travelling away, where God and heaven are out of sight. The truths that dawned on our dreaming childhood fade out, for then God seemed near, and angels were with us. Now we are in a far country. And what a country!—where there is no God, no Father's voice, while a long tract lies between us and our innocent home.

Then comes the period of famine, for this far country is a land of famine. Yes, there is now famine in our natures, for a void is there which none but God can satisfy. A nature whose faculties are only used to accomplish narrow and worldly aims is starved of its highest good, and sends up through the consciousness intimation of its wrongs. For there is no want so deep-seated as that of purity and peace, and when all without is tranquil, and the earth is teeming with abundance, this is that hunger which is unappeased, and which cannot be satisfied by bread alone. It is evidence of man's divine origin, that, sinful and degraded as he may become, he is not content with his sin and degradation; that his higher nature, even then, will assert its prerogatives and give him a sense of famine and desolation.

And then it is—to escape this inward sense of a starved and injured and baffled nature—that he has resort to corrupt and sensual pleasures. A necessity lies upon every one, that he become thoroughly spiritual or thoroughly carnal; that, if he will not return to his father's house, he wander among the swine-herds and eat of the husks that the swine do eat; that, if he will not rise to the communion of saints and agels, he sink into the lower pleasures and grovel in the stye of sensuality. Thus did the prodigal, though his better nature still claimed its own during the intervals of returning reason.

At one of these intervals, the Divine narrative says, "he came to himself." How significant is this language! As if his true self were that better mind within him, stored with the memories of his peaceful and happy home! He

came to himself! So a man is not himself when he falls into sin. He is beside himself, and he is restored to his true self when his better reason prevails and tells him of his divine nativity. And now his eye begins to measure back the way of his departure from his father's house. In want and wretchedness he thinks of what he is and what he was. How instinctively do his thoughts wander back to the place of his innocent home! The pastoral fields rise on his memory, over which he drove the flocks with tinkling bells. He thinks of his father's household, where he felt no wants and had no guilty recollections.

And now comes that decisive period in the history of every prodigal child. Will these tender recollections, these sweet voices of the memory, call him home, or will they come less often, and grow fainter and fainter, until finally they cease altogether? This is that crisis which comes at last to every one standing between the opposing forces of heaven and hell; false pleasures and gratifications luring him one way, and tender voices from within calling him another way. Which will he follow? If the latter, the strong and holy resolve is taken, the high and awful power of volition put forth in its energy: "I will arise and go to my father."

In the strength of this resolve he rises and goes. He travels back the dreary path of his wanderings till the scenes of his innocent days are given back to his sight, the flocks in the pastures, and the fields of waving corn, and, far beyond, his father's house reposing in a sunshine made softer both by distance and the magic of memory. He begins to muse with himself how he shall meet his wronged and offended father. But his father sees him a great way off, as he comes slowly up the hill. His father goes forth to meet him, his countenance lowering with anger. And he says to him: "I must have some satisfaction for my despised and violated authority. No repentance of yours can ever atone for all this. Unless thine elder and innocent brother will stand forth and receive upon his head the punishment due to thee, I forbid thee ever to tread these happy fields again." And the elder brother comes forth on that pastoral scene, and the father's arm is lifted over him in wrath——But what gloss is this? And what hideous spectacle comes in to mar the beauty of this pasto-

ral scene? Go back and read again. The father sees him afar off, and he knows the step of his son. He does not wait till he comes up, but runs quick over the fields to meet him, and falls upon his neck to embrace and kiss his child! And the child, amid the memorials of his innocent years, weeps away his guilt in his father's embrace. He conceals nothing, but lays open his whole soul to that all-expiating love: "I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." And his father said,—not something about satisfaction, but—"Bring forth the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, for this my son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found."

There are several terms quite current in the language of the religious world, which become technical or which pass into the provincialisms of sect, but which in this heaven-drawn picture of religious experience may be restored to their fresh and primitive meaning. Notwithstanding all the evils of the fall and our hereditary tendencies to sin,—and they are strong enough,—we yet learn from this map of human recessions and returnings that our first state is one of nearness to God; that in the period anterior to that of voluntary transgression we dwell with the Father. In that first period God is working within us when we know it not; and what impressions are made on the young heart, afterwards to be revived in their freshness,—what states of innocence are induced upon us, which even after we have wandered away from God shall come out, painted on the canvas of the soul, and make us sigh for something lost and resolve to win it again! Of this first period it is not only poetically but religiously true,—

> "O tender germ, and full of heaven!
> Not in the twilight stars on high,
> Not in moist flowers of even,
> See we our God so nigh."

So that we do not start on life's journey from the city of Destruction, but from the city of God, and the memory of what we experienced before our departure out of it pleads with us persuasively, and perhaps wins us back again. Hence you find that those who become the most genuine Christians, that is, who become truly childlike again, are

those in whom these states of innocence are revived, and who are called back to God by voices from the long past, coming over the desert of years as from some pre-existent world of sunshine and peace. Those who become religious without these revived states and memories, who make all the past black and depraved, and infancy itself smitten with the curse of God, never become children again. They are bigoted men, morose and hard-featured, breathing the hot airs of noon, and never coming back again into the golden atmosphere of pastoral fields.

When the prodigal wandered away from God into a far country, we have seen his condition described as one of famine and want. Now this period answers precisely to that which we call *repentance*,—that sorrow and wretchedness of a sinful state which precedes conversion. That sorrow which we call repentance is not sorrow on account of the consequences of sin, but on account of the sinful state itself. It is the afflicting experience of the wretchedness of mere selfish gratifications, whence come longings and sighings after purity and holiness and rest with God. Then comes the holy resolve, "I will arise and go to my Father." This is *conversion*, for that means turning and changing our course; and here we see it is the point where the prodigal turned back towards his father's house. And he arose and proceeded on his way. This, translated from the language of allegory to that of inward experience, is *spiritual progress*. Religious progress is spiritual travelling, and to know whether or not you are making that progress, you are to ask whether you are drawing nearer to God by passing into the state of infantile simplicity and innocence. We are making no true progress unless we are nearing the fields of childhood, or, in other words, becoming childlike. There the Father comes forth and meets the prodigal with a kiss of love, This is *forgiveness*, or reconciliation. You have its nature and conditions here set forth better than whole tomes of theology could describe it. Put into this narrative form, whole tomes of theology cannot obscure it. It is God and man meeting together again. Sinful man, through repentance and conversion, comes into the childlike state, —that of self-surrender; and there, and there alone, he meets the Father again, and leans on the bosom of his love.

This is forgiveness, reconciliation, atonement, and this is the only mode of obtaining it. Then the prodigal is clothed in new apparel. This is the *new morality* of the sinner brought back to God. It is not an inward experience alone, but the most pure and perfect of Christian practice,—when the subjective states, repentance, conversion, spiritual progress, forgiveness, have their last manifestation in the most external life, which clothes the Christian's mind like an angel's robe. "I put on righteousness, and it clothed me, and justice was my robe and diadem." Last of all, the feasting, the music, and the dancing,—by which the *joys and satisfactions* of living with God are put in contrast with a life of sin;—living with God, and feeding on heavenly viands, with living away from God in that far country, and eating the food of swine. Let those who think that religion takes away their pleasures compare the prodigal now returned, clothed in the best robe and sitting amid festal splendours, with the prodigal starving among the swine-herds, and they will see how Christ contrasts the joys of the religious experience with the dreary pleasures of sin.

We have now, I think, the whole experience of man wandering and returning, traced before us as upon a map, a pilgrim's progress written by a Divine hand. The state of infancy, or the starting-point of our pilgrimage—the departure away from God,—the repentance,—the conversion,—the spiritual progress that follows,—the atonement, or God and man meeting again,—the new outward life, and the joys of the new experience at home with God again;—here is an all-comprehending and all-sufficing theology. Here are the truths that hang in silvery clusters on the thread of this divinely written narrative. Are there none of us who are yet in that land of want and famine, and who have never put forth decisively the awful power of volition in that high resolve, "I will arise and go to my Father"? And are there no voices that call us back; no remembered tones of a Father's spirit that has been grieved away; no remorse for perverted and wasted powers; no fading ideals of purity and innocence that make us sigh for peace with God; no images that throng down from the hills of life's morning-land, and make us long to be innocent children again in our

Father's home,—like the man who, reposing on the field of strife during the truce of battle, went back in his vision to the scenes of pastoral innocence and peace?—

"I flew to the pleasant fields, traversed so oft
In life's morning march, when my bosom was young,
I heard my own mountain-goats bleating aloft,
And knew the sweet strain that the corn-reapers sung."

E. H. Sears.

LINES ON THE DEATH OF A CHILD.

Close softly, fondly, while ye weep,
His eyes, that death may seem like sleep,
And fold his hands in sign of rest,
His waxen hands, across his breast.

And make his grave where violets hide,
Where star-flowers strew the rivulet's side,
And blue birds, in the misty spring
Of cloudless skies and summer, sing.

But we shall mourn him long, and miss
His ready smile, his ready kiss,
The prattle of his little feet,
Sweet frowns and stammered phrases sweet;

And graver looks, serene and high,
A light of heaven in that young eye,
All these shall haunt us till the heart
Shall ache and ache—and tears will start.

But not his nobler part shall dwell
A prisoner to this narrow cell;
For he, whom now we hide from men
In the dark ground, shall live again;—

Shall break these clods, a form of light,
With nobler mien and purer sight,
And in the eternal glory stand,
Highest and nearest God's right hand,

Bryant.

CONGREGATIONAL MEMOIRS.

No. II.—LARNE AND KILWAUGHTER.

(*Continued from p. 22.*)

DISTRICTS in the Congregation were allotted to different Elders, over which they exercised a special superintendence, and which were called their "quarters."

"DECEMBER, 1699.—Mr. Ogilvie intimating to go about the work of visiting the families, to begin with Kilwochter, and Robert Nelson's quarter first; James Ramsay's quarter next; Alexander Millar's next; Robert White's quarter next; and also Samuel Smeally's quarter to be examined on Thursday. Appointed also some days of catechizing this week incoming in Kilwochter. Robert Nelson's quarter at his own house, and James Ramsay's quarter on Friday at his own house."

THE SESSION KEEPING DISCIPLINE implied the general charge which the Elders took of the morals and good conduct of the neighbourhood; bringing before them offenders of various classes; dealing with them by exhortation, admonition, or prayer, and in certain cases obliging them to "stand" before the Session or Congregation; confess their sin; declare repentance; and promise to sin no more. Various instances of this kind of discipline are recorded in the document from which I quote, but for obvious reasons I give only a few.

"FEBRUARY 17, 1700.—William Murray tells the Session of an abuse done in the meeting-house, on Thursday, the 30th January last, in making a mock with the collecting-box. The Session appoints that Mr. Ogilvie, on next Sabbath, shall give a public rebuke, not naming any persons.

"FEBRUARY 24.—The appointment of last Session that a public rebuke should be given this day to those who made the abuse in the meeting-house on 30th January is forborne now, in regard that some of them who were guilty have spoken to Mr. Ogilvie, declar-their sense of their fault, with promise not to do the like again."

What this abuse was, which consisted in making a mock with the collecting-box (or poor's box), we are not told. But I fear that in dealing with it the Larne Session paid too much respect to "respectable" offenders. On others they laid a heavier hand.

"JANUARY 9, 1700.—Will. Murray reports he spoke to Agnes Jolly, who answered him, and said she had been several times

before the Session already, and thought she had done, though she had not perfected her satisfaction. He told her if she did not attend the Session she would bring herself under a high censure, and therefore advised her to attend this day, which she promised to do."

Sometimes, however, the Session caught a Tartar:—

"Will. Murray also reports he spoke to James M'Ninsh. His answer was, Why doth not the Session call Thomas Edwards and his wife, who are in the same case with him? and further says if Thomas Edwards stand, then he shall stand, otherwise he will not."

On another occasion the minister is made an inspector of lodging-houses, and appointed to send for Margaret Getty, and "try at her how she entertains such company in her house," as it was reported to the Session that she had lately done, naming particularly "an idle fellow, a piper from Islandmagee."

"Testimonials" were granted by the Session to persons leaving their Congregation and neighbourhood, and were required by them from persons coming to reside within their bounds, without which certificates strangers or recent settlers were not admitted to Church privileges, such as baptism, marriage, and communion.

"At a General Synod, held in Antrim, June 4, 1700, it was recommended that great care be taken in giving testimonials, and that they be subscribed by the minister when at home, but, in case of absence or vacancy, by the Session, or any two of them, signifying that in their minister's absence, or their own vacancy, they have done so. And, in regard that some come with counterfeit superscriptions of testimonials, the Synod appointed that each minister should bring his superscription to the Presbytery, and subsequently to the Synod, for further knowledge of the manner how they subscribe their names. And, in 1705, the Synod further overtured, that if persons refuse to give a testimonial, those in the bounds whither they come are prudently to apply to the civil magistrate, to relieve the place of such vagrants, and they who entertain such vagrants shall be judged disorderly."

So that the Session, in addition to their other multifarious duties, acted as Poor Law Guardians for the neighbourhood. My old Session Book records many instances of such supervision, which need not here be quoted.

The Sunday Collections and other Charitable

CONTRIBUTIONS were dispensed by the Session under the presidency of the minister, *e.g.* :—

"FEB. 23, 1700.—Reported by the Elders of Kilwochter that Agnes Bleakly is dead, and had nothing to bury her, and that her sheet and coffin came to 7s. 6d., which must be paid out of the box at several times, 3s. whereof is this day given to Alexander Millar, in part payment, for that use (Mem.—It is all paid now). Thomas Edwards' case being formerly under the notice of the Session, is acquainted that he has some effects which he might sell to help to maintain himself, and not be so burdensome to the box, it being so weak by many demands. Will. Murray and Robert Kerr are to inform him the box is not able."

The reader will remember that this Thomas Edwards had lately set at nought sessional discipline. The Elders *have* him now. "The Box" is a phrase still used to denote the receptacle for the Sunday collections.

"Dan. Eccles informed the Session that Robert Hanna is in need of the price of a half boll of corn to sow. After some debate, it being a bad precedent to be running upon the box for such supplies, it is thought he might rather go among the country to look for corn; yet, six shillings are allowed him in the meantime out of the box."

I am happy to say, that in the days of which we speak, as at present, Larne charity did not begin *and end* at home:—

"JAN. 20, 1700.—Mr. Ogilvie acquaints the Session that Mr. John Campbell (minister of Cairncastle) recommends to them one Alexander Campbell, a gentleman who has had great loss by death of cattle and shaking of his corn last season, whereby he and his wife and family of seven children are reduced to great poverty. The Session being sensible of Mr. John Campbell's kindness to us, and also his relation of the gentleman's condition, thinks fit that this Congregation be desired this day to increase their charity towards his relief, the which the people did observe, and the collection amounted to 30s. 8d., whereof the Session did allow the said Alex. Campbell 20s., and the rest to supply our own poor."

This latter prudent precaution of providing specially for those of our own house, is invariably observed amongst us, on similar occasions, to this day.

"FEB. 23, 1700.—One William Campbell, having a certificate from several gentlemen of the name of Campbell, and brought to poverty by bad seasons, three years ago—the Session allows him one shilling!!"

I suppose the Larne Elders thought that "the Campbells were coming" rather too often to their "box."

"May, 1700.—Reported from the Presbytery that there are several charities to be taken to next Presbytery, viz., to ministers' widows, Mrs. Douglass and Mrs. Gilchrist, to each 4s.; a collection for one Mrs. Handberry, in Dublin, her husband lying in prison in France for being surety for one Mr. Shaw, who, if he would recant from the Protestant religion, would be released, but denieth to recant. The collection goes through the whole bounds of the Synod for Mr. Shaw. Also two other charities for two men who suffered by fire, to each of them 2s. Also the Clerk of Synod, his fees, 1s., the Clerk of Presbytery's fees 5s., John Wiley, in Randalstown, 5s., and 1s. meeting shill."

This "meeting shill." appears to have been a contribution of one shilling, which the Presbytery required each congregation within their bounds to pay at each meeting of their body, and which the brethren expended mostly in charity to poor persons. The payments ordered above were a heavy pull upon "the Box," but "the Box" survived, for

"August, 1700.—Mr. Ogilvie reports from the Synod of Coleraine, the 8th inst., that the official court, out of spleen, has commenced a suit against Mr. John Thom for marrying a couple of people, and is come near the length of excommunication, and in regard it hath been great charges to him already, and will be more, to defend the suit, the Synod appointed that each parish within their bounds shall contribute towards his help in this affair 5s., the which the Session did out of the box. Also a gentleman, a worthy minister's son, who had suffered great loss in England by fire, is supplied by the ministers in these bounds, and is recommended to Mr. Ogilvie. The Session allows him 5s.

The Elders were obliged to attend Synods and Presbyteries in Rotation, or to find substitutes, sometimes at their own charge, sometimes at the charge of the Session in general. The only excuses received for non-compliance with this rule were age, frailty, or poverty. Thus, on one occasion, "Robert White could not go for want of a horse." On another occasion, Alex. Millar, "because of his age and indisposition of body, sends his son, Samuel Millar, in his stead, of which the Session approves." The General Synod of June 2, 1697, had

"Overtured that Elders be chosen in their respective Sessions to attend Presbyteries for six months together, this being agreeable to the practice of the Church of Scotland, and tending much to acquaint Elders with our discipline."

With this suggestion the Larne Session seem for a time

to have complied, but the following resolution on the subject was adopted by them :—

"August, 1700.—Notwithstanding of an Act of Session formerly made, that each Elder should go by turn three Presbyteries together, and that the rest should contribute to their charges, yet, in consideration that some object against the said Act for several reasons, viz., that some are not in a capacity to attend Presbyteries so long together, therefore this session have taken it into further consideration, and reverse the former Act, and ordain that a list of the Elder's names shall be made by the Clerk of Session, beginning with the eldest made Elder, and so to go on by turn, to attend the Presbytery but one time at once and at his own charge."

From this rule three Elders are excepted by name, on account of age, frailty, and poverty.

6. Stipend.—On this point I am happy to say that the entries in my old Session-Book are not numerous. What we should find in the minister's private diary, if we could get a sight of it, for the same period, I cannot tell; but in the lay record we read only occasionally as follows :— "The collectors of stipend are using diligence, and expect success. The year's stipend is not yet perfected, especially in the Old Town. *Kilwochter is secured.*" This latter expression refers to an arrangement by which Mr. Agnew of Kilwaughter, in the leases which he granted to his tenantry, provided that they should "yearly and every year pay to *him* and to his heirs, during the continuance of their lease," certain graduated amounts "of stipends towards the support of the Dissenting Minister of Larne and Kilwaughter." I quote these words from an Old Kilwaughter Lease now in my possession, and will only add that this arrangement, which for the minister was most convenient, and for the tenantry was fair and candid, continued in force on the Kilwaughter estate until 1798, when it was done away with at the express request of the then "minister of Larne and Kilwaughter," Rev. James Worrall; for which unauthorized alienation of part of the income of his successors, one of those successors does not feel at all obliged to that reverend gentleman.

"Nov., 1700.—Robert Murdoch attended the Presbytery at Glenarm, and reports that by the Synod's appointment each parish in their bounds is, each half year, to produce a discharge from the minister of the payment of his stipend."

An excellent rule; followed up in 1710 by another Synodical overture, which, in these days of agitation for increased ministerial support, I may be allowed to quote.

"General Synod at Belfast, June 21, 1710.—An overture with respect to such of our people as are able, but not willing, to contribute any part of their worldly substance for maintaining their ministers who watch for their souls. This sin being gross, at which the people of God are offended, is to be taken notice of as such. The most proper and Christian way is to treat them as *scandalous* persons. We do not think it is a good way that, upon their non-payment, the minister should refuse to take any care of them, or do ministerial duties. This is not the way to win souls. Let all private endeavours be used for bringing them up to their duty by Elders and collectors. When these do not succeed, let their names be given to the Session as scandalous persons. Let the Session be allowed to call a neighbouring minister to keep Session with them once in the year, yea, once in the quarter, if they see need, that they may be authoritatively and carefully dealt with, for bringing them to a sense of their sin. If this way will not prevail, let them be dilated to the Presbytery as other obstinate persons; and if the Presbytery, after pains taken on them, prevail not, let them be declared none of our communion. Ordered that a copy of this overture be sent to every Presbytery, who are to communicate it to their respective Sessions; and that every Congregation be obliged to make up their deficiency or arrear of stipend as soon as may be."

7. Public Worship was observed by the Congregation regularly on Sundays, morning and afternoon (at least in the Summer), and with almost equal regularity on some week day, Thursday or Friday. The following is the only entry referring to the celebration of Divine Service which I find in the old Session Book of Larne:—

"It is thought convenient, in order to induce the people to come into the house, rather than be lying without' on the Sabbaths and public days of worship, that the Clerk begin to sing a verse or two of a Psalm before the Minister comes in the morning, and between sermons. The which is now done, and the people are satisfied with it."

This was an insidious, and not very successful attempt to do away with the only Sunday relaxation which Presbyterians then had,—"the crack o' the kirkyard."

(*To be continued.*)

A CONFESSOR OF THE LAST CENTURY.

Just about a century ago there was settled in a certain parish in Yorkshire a new Vicar, who brought with him for the discharge of his onerous and responsible duties, a mind well trained by college studies and private culture, a heart deeply imbued with religious sentiments, and a zeal greater than at that time was commonly found in the clergymen of the Established Church. Nor were his zeal and devotion the ebullitions that are sometimes apparent in young curates when they enter on their first charge, which time gradually cools down. He had been in charge of other parishes, had much experience in the work of the ministry, and was thus in every respect fitted to prove a blessing to the people who now welcomed him as their new pastor. The settlement was one peculiarly agreeable to himself, and while his intimacy and influence with distinguished families opened up to him the prospect of more lucrative preferment elsewhere, he chose this Yorkshire parish as more suited to his tastes, and as presenting an interesting field for the holy work to which he had devoted himself. The labours which he undertook for the temporal and spiritual improvement of his people are full of interest, and show how earnest he was in his Master's cause. Officiating twice every Sunday in the church, he occupied the interval between the forenoon and afternoon services in catechizing the young, while a large portion of his time through the week was taken up in visiting the sick, and relieving and comforting the poor and distressed.

Although accustomed to move in a high rank, he practised the utmost economy in his domestic arrangments, in order that he might have the better means of carrying out his benevolent schemes for the improvement of his flock, and he adopted and scrupulously acted on the principle of spending in his parish every penny of his income, beyond what was needed for the wants of his own home. In all his plans of economy and usefulness he was aided and encouraged by his wife, who was distinguished by her active goodness, and who sought only how she might assist the vicar in carrying on his Christian work. By their united efforts they established and supported charity

schools for the children of the poor, while in seasons of distress they spent large sums in supplying food for the hungry and clothing for the naked. At the time to which we refer, there was little opportunity for the humbler classes to procure suitable books, and the good Vicar expended a considerable sum annually in purchasing and distributing volumes suited to improve as well as entertain those who read them. While thus he was active in his endeavours to improve the condition of the parish by schools and other benevolent institutions, his pulpit instructions were admirably adapted to his hearers. He was simple, earnest, and practical in his preaching. To employ his own words, addressed to his people at the close of his incumbency—"I have endeavoured to teach you the truth which Christ our Lord taught, as far as I was able to learn it by an impartial and diligent search of the Holy Scriptures. And I often reminded you, that you were not to believe anything because spoken by me, but to examine and compare how far it was agreeable to Holy Scripture, our only rule and guide." His discourses consisted very much of expositions of large portions of the New Testament, from which he drew the practical lessons which they contained. He was most anxious always to press on his hearers the truth so often overlooked—that religion does not consist in outward forms and ordinances, but in an entire conversion and devotedness of the heart to God, leading to sobriety, purity, brotherly love, kindness, and integrity. His ministry, both in the church and in the homes of his parishioners, was thoroughly Christian, and formed a striking contrast to that of many of the neighbouring clergy who, from worldly motives, undertook the pastoral office. One who knew much of this worthy Vicar and his parish labours, has left on record a picture of the Sunday at the Vicarage which we are tempted to transcribe:—

"Beyond all other days it was the delight of my life to spend the Sunday with my friends at ———. The morning family prayer was short, but appropriate, pious, and animated. The sermon at church practical, serious, instructive. At two o'clock, before the commencement of afternoon service, the Vicar devoted an hour in the church every Sunday alternately to catechizing the children of the parish, and to expounding the Bible to the boys of a large school which was at that time kept in the village. The number of

the boys generally amounted to about one hundred, who formed a large circle round him; himself holding a Bible open in his hand, with which he walked slowly round, giving it regularly in succession to the boys, each reading in his turn the passage about to be explained. This method, accompanied by frequently recapitulating what had been said, and by asking them questions relating to it, kept them very attentive, and the good effects of these labours proved in many cases very apparent in after life.

"After evening service the Vicar received different classes of young men and women on alternate Sundays, for the purpose of instruction; and his wife, in like manner, in another apartment, had two classes of children, boys and girls alternately. The family supped at eight, after which a chapter in the Bible, followed by some practical remarks, was read by Mrs. ——— to the family, and the service of the day concluded by a short appropriate prayer. How strongly pictured in my remembrance is the image of my excellent friend, as he walked backward and forward in the room after supper, when the labours of the day were over, his countenance beaming with benevolence; dilating, in a manner peculiarly his own, perhaps on the goodness of God in the Gospel dispensation, perhaps on peculiar traits in excellent characters whom he had known, or of whom he had read, already gone to their reward, or perhaps, in general, on the happiness of a life of virtue and holiness."

It is interesting to observe, in this picture of a Sunday at the vicarage, the first effort, so far as we have any authentic information, towards the formation of a Sunday School, and to recognize such an important institution regularly organized in a parish of Yorkshire nearly twenty years before Robert Raikes opened such an establishment in Gloucester. When the Vicar, then at the age of fifty, had settled in the parish, he hoped to end his days there, faithfully labouring for the temporal and spiritual good of a people whom he loved; but it was not so to be. In early life he had disapproved of some things in the Thirty-nine Articles, and while at college it struck him as strange that candidates for ordination should be required to subscribe to so many positions and doctrines as are contained in the liturgy, articles, and homilies. When he was some years in the Church, doubts concerning the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity arose in his mind, and he was led to study the Scriptures with much attention, in order to settle his views and relieve himself from painful suspense on so important a question. The result of a calm and diligent inquiry is thus expressed by himself—"The more I searched the more I saw the little

foundation there was for the doctrine commonly received, and interwoven with all the public devotions of the Church, and could not but be disturbed at a discovery so ill suiting my situation. In the end I became fully persuaded, to use St. Paul's express words, that 'there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things and we in Him,' and He alone to be worshipped. This appeared to be the uniform, unvaried language and practice of the Bible throughout; and I found the sentiments and practice of Christians in the first and best ages corresponding with it." His first impulse, on arriving at this important conclusion, was to resign his living; but painful struggles arose in his mind, and several friends, themselves dissenting from the Church's doctrines, yet still holding their preferments, suggested various grounds on which they argued that he might be perfectly justified in remaining in the Church; and he brought himself to consider the Trinitarian forms of the Liturgy as a three-fold representation of the one God, the Father, governing all things by himself and by his Son and Spirit, and as a three-fold way of addressing him as a Creator and original benevolent cause of all things, as Redeemer of mankind by his Son, and their sanctifier by his Holy Spirit. This view, which is simply Sabellianism, quieted his scruples for a time; but it was not sufficient permanently to satisfy one so ingenuous, earnest, and conscientious. After everything that could be urged by friends to the contrary, and after considering several schemes by which his scruples might be overcome, one of which, suggested by one who had himself embraced Unitarian opinions, was to alter the service, and throw on others the responsibility of dismissing him, he thus expresses his settled conviction—"Upon the most calm and serious deliberation, and weighing of every circumstance, I am obliged to give up my benefice, whatever I suffer by it, unless I would lose all inward peace, and hope of God's favour and acceptance in the end."

About this time an Association had been formed by some of the clergy of the Established Church and a few of the laity, for the purpose of seeking the consent of Parliament that a declaration of assent to the Sufficiency of Scripture might be substituted for subscription to the

Thirty-nine Articles and the Book of Common Prayer. This Association was called, from the place of meeting, the Feathers Tavern Association. A petition was drawn up, and presented to the House of Commons, on Feb. 6, 1772; but, though supported by unanswerable argument, its prayer was indignantly rejected by the overwhelming majority of 217 to 71.

The Association determined again to apply to Parliament, and thus the carrying out of the Vicar's resolution was again deferred, lest precipitancy on his part should seem to discourage them; but at length all hope of relief from the House of Commons was given up, and in November, 1773, he informed his diocesan, the Bishop of Chester, of his determination to resign his vicarage. Both he and his devoted partner were prepared to meet all difficulties, and encounter all privations, rather than retain a position of ease and respectability at the sacrifice of conscience. Stronger ties than emolument bound them to a parish in which their labours of Christian love had endeared them to many, but they felt that every thing must be sacrificed rather than their allegiance to God and to his Christ; and therefore, though nought but poverty was before them, they left all that they might obey God. On Sunday, November 28th, the Vicar preached his farewell sermon; the Church was densely crowded, and the scene was at once impressive and sorrowful. The afflicted parishioners drew the parallel between their honoured pastor and the venerable apostle, bearing their testimony that not for the space of three, but of ten years he had "ceased not to warn every one night and day" of their Christian obligations. In a few days after, he left the parish. The feelings that actuated him and his partner on this eventful occasion, are expressed with much simplicity and force in his farewell address to his flock. "To leave a station of ease and affluence, and to have to combat with various straits and hardships of an uncertain world, affords but a dark prospect. But we must willingly submit to this dark lot, when not to be avoided without deserting our duty to God and his truth." "It is of small concern in what outward circumstances we pass over the short term of life, if we can but obtain that blessed approbation in the end, Well done,

good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

It was strikingly characteristic of this worthy Confessor that, now released from his parish, he sought not how he could most conveniently earn a livelihood, but how he could best promote the truth for sake of which he had sacrificed so much. Accordingly he repaired to London, and, aided by friends whom sympathy with his views and admiration of his conduct had drawn around him, he opened a room in the metropolis for the worship of the One God the Father, through one Lord Jesus Christ. This was the first place of worship in London avowedly Unitarian, and in that room, and in a larger chapel subsequently erected on the same premises, this noble-minded Christian man ministered for twenty years, and vindicated the "long-lost" truth that "the Father is the only true God."

Most of our readers will have recognised in this sketch of a noble Confessor, the character of Theophilus Lindsey, who, in obedience to the dictates of conscience, resigned the living of Catterick, in 1773, and soon after opened a place for Unitarian worship in Essex Street, Strand, and was the first minister in the chapel of which the Rev. T. Madge and the Rev. P. Ham are at present joint pastors. How beautiful the character of this confessor, contrasted with that of so many who deal in mental reservations and equivocal phrases, sacrifice conscience to retain a benefice, and serve Mammon while they pretend to be serving God!

HALF-HOURS WITH A SUNDAY-SCHOOL CLASS.

JESUS AT THE WELL OF SYCHAR.

Half-an-hour with a Sunday-School class,—to many it will seem a short time, especially as only once a week, in most cases, has the teacher the opportunity of meeting his class: and yet I am disposed to think that a teacher seldom succeeds in keeping up the attention of his pupils for a longer period. Often, I am aware, an hour or more is occupied with a class, but it will be found that the child-

ren's attention generally flags, they become restless and troublesome, and what should be throughout a labour of love becomes irksome and wearying even to the teacher. But, if sufficient preparation of the lesson be made before meeting the class on the Sunday morning, a teacher may easily succeed in interesting even thoughtless children for thirty minutes, and in fixing in their minds some important doctrine, or impressing on their hearts some important duty. I purpose sketching in *The Christian Unitarian* some Sunday-School lessons, not that I can thus unfold any novel mode of instruction, or give any information that may be new to teachers, but I desire to interest as many as possible in the Sunday-School work, and at least encourage them in their endeavours to make the children understand what they read. It is not necessary, in the few lessons I may sketch, to select any book of the New Testament, and to go systematically through it: that, indeed, would be a tedious work; but I shall take up the passages in the Sacred narrative that happen to be the subjects of instruction for my own class. And I may here remark, that children will be more interested by the teacher selecting suitable passages from the Gospels or the Acts, presenting, as it were, pictures in the Saviour's history or that of his Apostles, in which, as in a mirror, are exhibited the leading principles of our religion and the spirit of piety, holiness, and love which it breathes. Although, not only in Church Education Schools, but also in those of the National Board, we find the children reading right on from Genesis to Malachi, and from Matthew to Revelation, and unreflecting zealots flatter themselves that this is Scriptural Education, there are none, I believe, belonging to the Unitarian denomination that would endorse such a mode of procedure. Selections judiciously made are more likely not only to interest but to instruct children.

Our present lesson is found in John iv. 1—26, in which we have beautifully told the conversation of our Lord with a Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar. There are none to whom the passage is not familiar, and I need not therefore recite it. The pupils know that this is the subject of their lesson, and it is to be presumed that they come more or less prepared. In order that the passage

may be fully understood, it is necessary that the meaning of the words should be accurately known, and the first ten minutes may be most advantageously employed in questioning the pupils on the principal words and phrases that occur in it. Thus I find the word "Lord" in the first verse, and I inquire to whom it refers, and whether it is ever used to denote any other person, or employed in any other sense. One of the children will probably reply at once that it is sometimes used to denote God, and sometimes to signify any master, as the lord of a house, or the lord of a vineyard. The use of capital letters, when "Lord" signifies Jehovah in the Old Testament, may here be explained to them. Next we come to "Pharisees," and the leading characteristics of this sect of Jews may be stated in a sentence or two, and it may, at the same time, be remarked that such parade of religion as distinguished them was particularly condemned by our Lord. "Jesus" is the next word that may be spoken of, and it may be shown by reference to passages of Scripture, that the name was not confined to Christ, but was a not uncommon name among the Jews. It denotes the person, not the office, of our Lord. The names "Judæa," "Galilee," and "Samaria," lead us to refer to the map of Palestine, which should be at hand, to point out their positions and their extent and boundaries, and perhaps name over some of the towns in each. It will at once appear why, in going from Judæa to Galilee, he must go through Samaria; and it may be mentioned, at the same time, that at certain seasons, when the Jordan was low, travellers could cross the river by one of the fords, and in that way avoid going through Samaria. "Sychar" may be pointed out on the map, and it may be explained that, under its ancient name of Shechem, it is often mentioned in the Old Testament. "Jacob" and "Joseph" will lead to a few questions on their life and character, and the important part which they acted in the history of God's people. Some of the pupils, from what they have learned in the concluding part of the Sunday-School Lesson Book, may be able to explain the mode in which the Jews divided the day, and to shew that the "sixth hour" means mid-day. "Jews" and "Samaritans" will require explanation, in order that the children may

clearly understand the grounds of the bitter enmity that they entertained towards each other. Such were the rejection by the Samaritans of all the Jewish Scriptures except the Law; the refusal of the Jews to receive the aid of the Samaritans in rebuilding the temple; and the violent opposition of the latter, in consequence, to its being rebuilt; and the subsequent erection of a separate temple in Samaria for the worship of God "Living water" is an instance, not unfrequent in the Scriptures, of a word being used in a figurative meaning, to express some spiritual idea: it evidently signifies here the renewing and reviving influence of religious truth It may be remarked to the children, that, in order to understand Christ's teaching, they must always use their common sense, and exercise their powers of thought. "Prophet" will be shown to denote one empowered to teach—not necessarily one who foretells—although the power of foretelling seems to have been possessed by the authorized teachers among the Jews. It was no prediction of our Lord, but his knowledge of her past history, that impressed the woman with the idea that he was a "prophet," "This mountain" the class may not be able to explain, and it will therefore be necessary to inform them that it refers to Mount Gerizim, not far from the well which is the scene of the narrative, and that it is the mountain on which the Samaritans erected a temple for the worship of Jehovah. "Jerusalem," they will all know, was the principal city of the Holy Land, and contained the great temple in which the Jews at stated times assembled from all parts of the country for worship, and in which they believed God especially dwelt. "The Father" is the term by which the Saviour delights to designate God, and it expresses, through an earthly and intelligible image, the care and love, the mercy and compassion, which God exercises towards all his children. "Messias" is the Hebrew, as Christ is the Greek term, to denote "anointed," and as Jesus signifies the person, so Messias or Christ denotes the office of our Lord: he is Jesus the anointed, or Jesus Christ.

The children may now read, if time permit, in alternate verses, the whole passage, and they will be able accurately to understand every word in it. Then, in a few brief

sentences, the whole scene may be presented to them. Jesus, wearied and foot-sore, after a journey of many hours, reclining beside the well, whose surrounding trees afforded a grateful shade from the mid-day sun,—near to him, and standing out prominent in the view, the mountain of Gerizim, with the temple crowning its summit,—a woman coming from the neighbouring town, according to a custom still prevalent in the East, to draw water from the well,—the simple request of Jesus,—the bitter prejudice of the woman, and her surprise at the request,—the instructive though at first perplexing reply of our Lord,—the knowledge he shows of her history, impressing her with the feeling that he is a "prophet,"'—and then the eagerness with which she interrogates him on the great question that divided the nations,—and the sublime language in which he exhibits the Father as the sole object of worship, and teaches that that only is acceptable worship which is offered "in spirit and in truth." The woman, impressed with the wondrous doctrine of the mysterious stranger, and unable to reply, gave utterance to the prevailing expectation of the people in the language of faith and hope—"I know that the Messias cometh—when he is come he will tell us all things." What amazement must have filled her mind, when he exclaimed—"I that speak unto thee am he!"

The children will find it an interesting exercise to draw from the passage the lessons which it contains, and the teacher will assist them in doing so. Such lessons as the following are easily deduced from this scene at the Well of Sychar :—

1. Our Lord was always bent on his Father's business, and not only in the temple at Jerusalem, or before the crowds that followed him in Galilee, but to the humblest and most despised of the people, and though exhausted with fatigue, he sought to make known that Gospel which he was anointed to proclaim.

2. Our Lord teaches us that we should worship Jehovah as "the Father," and we may be sure, no matter how much the practice of the Christian world, Catholic and and Protestant, may be opposed to us, that we cannot be wrong in doing what Christ has so plainly and emphatically taught us.

3. We learn that worship is acceptable, not because it is offered in one place or another, consecrated or not consecrated, but because it is offered in spirit—the heart engaged in the service: and such worship may be offered anywhere—in the humblest cabin, or the most wretched garret.

4. We should worship in truth, not thinking one thing and saying another, not using language which contradicts our inmost convictions—for then we appear before our Father with a lie on our lips.

A SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER.

END OF "THE ESSAYS AND REVIEWS" LITIGATION.

As will have been seen by the newspapers, the highest court of appeal has reversed the judgment given in the Court of Arches against Dr. Williams and Mr. Wilson, two of the writers of "Essays and Reviews." The Court decided that while Dr. Williams held that the Bible was "an expression of devout reason, and therefore to be read with reason in freedom," he does not teach that it is the composition or work of devout men and nothing more, inasmuch as in another part of the same Essay, he has plainly affirmed that the Holy Spirit dwelt in the sacred writers of the Bible. The Court also decided that when Dr. Williams represents "merit by transfer as a fiction," he cannot be considered as contravening the 11th Article; for, while it speaks of Christ's merits, it does not speak of their being transferred at all. Mr. Wilson had been accused of teaching that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were not written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and the charge against him, in the opinion of the Court, involved the proposition—"That it is a contradiction of the doctrine laid down in the 6th and 20th Articles of religion, in the Nicene Creed, and in the Ordination Service of Priests, to affirm that any part of the canonical books of the Old and New Testament, upon any subject whatever, however unconnected with religious faith or moral duty, was not written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit." The Court was unable to say that the passages extracted from Mr. Williams' Essay are contradicted by, or inconsistent with, the articles or formularies to which the charge refers, and to which alone they were at liberty to refer. Another charge against Mr. Wilson was, that he has, in effect, declared that after this life there will be no judgment of God, according to those whom he shall approve, everlasting life or eternal happiness, and to those whom he shall condemn, everlasting death or eternal misery, and this position is affirmed to be contrary to the formularies of the Church. The Court found nothing in the passages cited from Mr. Wilson's Essay, to prove this accusation against him,

and expressed their opinion that the hope that the punishment of the wicked may not endure to all eternity, is certainly not at variance with anything found in the Apostle's Creed or in the Nicene Creed, in the Absolution which forms part of the Morning and Evening Prayer, or in the Burial Service. On the design and general tendency of the "Essays and Reviews," and on the effect or aim of the whole Essay of Dr. Williams, or the whole Essay of Mr. Wilson, the Court neither could nor did pronounce any decision.

Whatever consternation this decision in the Privy Council may create in the Established Church, the general feeling of the community, as indicated by the public press, is gratification that the accused parties have been acquitted. There is a just and deeply-rooted dislike to anything in the shape of persecution for opinions honestly held, and candidly confessed. In this feeling we heartily share. But, from another point of view, there is ground for regret that writings, so entirely opposed, in their teachings and spirit, to the Church of England, should be sanctioned by the Law Courts, as thus encouragement is given to the evil already so prevalent, of men disbelieving the Church's doctrines, and yet partaking of its emoluments, and aiding to perpetuate its errors, superstitions, and contradictions. Were such men, driven by the power of the Law, or, better still, prompted by their own conscientious feelings, to leave a Church whose plainly expressed views they have abandoned, and to swell the ranks of dissent, they would do much to strengthen the cause of Nonconformity, which the recent discussion tends greatly to weaken. The acquittal of Dr. Williams and Mr. Wilson must act as an additional opiate to the thousands and thousands of worshippers in the Established Church, whose consciences are already dull enough.

We were never able to join in the general approval with which the Unitarian denomination welcomed the publication of these Essays and Reviews. Much there was in them which we might reasonably have been glad to see, as confirming views which have distinguished our Church, and for which we have often been denounced as infidels; but there was in several of the Essays, and especially in the Review by Dr. Williams, a sceptical tone which no believer in Divine Revelation, whether Unitarian or Trinitarian, could read without pain; and worse still was the doctrine plainly inculcated in the Essay of Mr. Wilson, that men are justified in signing what they do not believe. If teachers of religion inculcate such a principle in sacred things, how can we look for integrity in men of business, or honesty on the part of the general public?

UNITARIANS IN THE IRISH CENSUS OF 1861.

Tables of the last census in Ireland, which was taken in 1861, have been lately published, and exhibit the religious professions of the inhabitants, as entered by them in the census papers. From these it appears that 3,800 entered themselves as Unitarians, 201

as Unitarian Presbyterians, 167 as Non-Subscribing Presbyterians, and 32 as Arians. It is known that these numbers represent but a fraction of the Unitarians in Ireland, and many may be puzzled to understand how the numerical importance of the denomination should be so incorrectly stated. It is only necessary, in explanation, to state, that the Irish Unitarians are, in church government, Presbyterians, and that immediately before the taking of the census, a circular was issued by the Committee of the Non-Subscribing Association, and read on the Sunday preceding the day on which the census was taken, requesting that all members of the denomination would enter their names as "Presbyterians." Some misunderstanding the instructions given, or desirous of explicitly stating their doctrinal views, gave what they regarded as a more candid statement of their religious belief, and hence, while the majority are enrolled as "Presbyterians," several thousands appear as Unitarians, Arians, or Non-Subscribing Presbyterians.

A STATEMENT CONFIRMED.

As we go to press, we perceive, in *The Northern Whig* of the 26th ult., a report of a soiree at Ballyclare, in which the Rev. John Porter pronounces as "purely false, and without foundation," the following statement which we made in our number for July last, in an article entitled "The Ballyclare Case" :—

"An unworthy effort has been made to represent the dissatisfied party as inconsiderable, and we have been informed, that a private letter was written to an influential minister in England, stating, that of the 83 names attached to the Resolution of February 2, 1862, withdrawing from the Presbytery of Antrim, 56 were fraudulently added."

It appears by Mr. Porter's speech that the influential minister in England referred to was the Rev. James Martineau, and that he was himself the party who wrote to him. He omits to add that his letter was accompanied by an attorney's certificate for its accuracy. While Mr. Porter flippantly pronounces our statement to be a falsehood, he has, unfortunately for himself, given a letter of Mr. Martineau's, written in July last, in reply, it would seem, to one which Mr. Porter had written to him, and in this letter Mr. Martineau confirms all that is stated. The following is the portion of Mr. Martineau's letter bearing on the subject: it is dated July 5, 1863 :—

"If the letter to which *The Christian Unitarian* refers is still in existence (which I doubt), it is beyond my reach till I return to town at the end of September. I can, therefore, only report its statement about the Ballyclare list from memory. My impression is pretty distinct that your correction of the numbers on the voting-list was given in a postscript, and was added to the letter—after you had seen the legal adviser of your Presbytery, and on his authority—not as a matter of immediate personal knowledge. The statement was not exactly that the fifty-six names were 'fraudulently added,' but that they had no right to be there."

Mr. Martineau, it will be observed, says that Mr. Porter's state-

ment was not exactly that the fifty-six names were "fraudulently added," but that "they had no right to be there." What important difference there is between the two expressions we cannot perceive. One name or two, or even half a dozen, which had no right to be there, might have been inadvertently introduced in a list of eighty-three; but how fifty-six such names could be otherwise than fraudulently introduced, we cannot understand. The whole list of eighty-three names, attached to the Resolution referred to, were *bonâ fide*, as has since been proved. We will not accuse Mr. Porter of writing what he knew to be untrue; he had, we shall charitably presume, been misinformed, and possibly any doubt he might have entertained respecting the accuracy of his letter to Mr. Martineau, or rather of the postscript,—for, as in other cases, it was in a *postscript* the important information was given,—may have been quieted by the assurance of his legal adviser; but we thank Mr. Porter for publishing the names of the parties, which we did not feel at liberty to divulge, and for generously affording us the means of confirming everything we alleged. Why did he not publish this letter of Mr. Martineau's months ago? and for his own sake, why did he publish it at all?

INTELLIGENCE.

INDUCTION OF THE REV. D. THOMPSON AT SALE, CHESHIRE.

On February 11th, the Rev. D. Thompson was settled as minister of the Cross-Street Chapel, Sale, Cheshire. The devotional service was conducted by the Rev. J. Harrop. Joseph Hickin, Esq., in the name of the congregation, welcomed the young minister, and the Rev. H. Green, Knutsford, on behalf of himself and his brother ministers, gave him the right hand of fellowship. Mr. Thompson, in his reply said:—"I thank my friends who have just spoken for the words of kindly welcome they have addressed to me. It has not been without prayerful consideration that I have entered upon this all-important work, and that I have obeyed the call to begin my labours here. It is indeed an arduous and a solemn thing that you ask me to do, when you ask me to minister to you in holy things, to stand up before you, and speak to you from time to time in the highest of all human concerns. My own strength must utterly fail me in this work. But I have the firm faith that God will strengthen me, and I believe that he will do so in proportion to my sincerity and my faithfulness. I believe that, aided by Him, we may do something in this place, in this district, to promote the spread of pure and undefiled religion, and to make the kingdom of Christ and God a present reality in our own souls and the souls of others."

The Rev. W. Gaskell gave the charge to the young minister, and the Rev. C. Beard gave the charge to the people. The services were closed with singing and prayer.

In the evening a tea party was held; about 150 persons were

present. The chair was occupied by T. Alcock, M.D. Mr. Thompson, in responding to a welcome offered to him by the congregation, spoke a few hearty and earnest words indicating his sense of the responsible work he had undertaken. Among the speakers in the course of the evening, was the Rev. John Ferrar, who has lately left a curacy in the Church of Ireland, and joined the Unitarian denomination. He gave an account of the reasons which led him to leave the Church which was once so dear to him. It was not by reading any doctrinal books that he was led to embrace Unitarianism; but simply by reading the New Testament in the original tongue, and by finding that the doctrines which were set forth in the creeds of the Church of England were not in accordance with the Word of God.

"THE CHRISTIAN REFORMER."

The Christian Reformer, which, under the Editorship of the Rev. R. Aspland, and afterwards of his son, the Rev. R. B. Aspland, was for so many years the leading Unitarian Magazine, has been discontinued. We regret that, from want of the liberal support to which the principles of the *Reformer* well entitled it, we have lost a periodical which, while it was thoroughly Unitarian, was, at the same time, consistently Christian. It always contended for the Divine Mission of the Saviour, and in the concluding number, published in December, the Editor has written very strongly in favour of this fundamental doctrine of Christianity. We perceive that the friends of Mr. Aspland have availed themselves of his retiring from the Editorship of *The Reformer*, to express, in some substantial manner, the high personal regard in which they hold him, and their sense of his long, able, and faithful services in connexion with the Unitarian body. The general esteem which is entertained for Mr. Aspland, not only by those who agree with his theological opinions, but also by those who dissent from them, has been already exhibited in the number of persons who have entered their names as subscribers to the contemplated testimonial.

A new magazine has been advertised to take the place of *The Reformer:* it is to be Edited by the Rev. Charles Beard, and to be published every second month. Its title was first announced to be "*Thought and Life*," but has been since altered to "*The Theological Review—a journal of Religious Thought and Life.*" Its prospectus, and the list of contributors, lead us to expect that it will aim at embracing all parties, and expounding all the views which Unitarianism in its widest sense has been employed to designate.

MANCHESTER DISTRICT UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.—The fourth annual meeting of this Association was held at the Cross Street Chapel rooms, Manchester, on February 12th,—the Rev. W. Gaskell in the chair. The Rev. T. E. Poynting, one of the Secretaries, read the report, which gave satisfactory details respecting the seven stations to which the efforts of the Association have been directed. The Committee thanked the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, and the Belfast Tract Society, for their grants of books and tracts.

OBITUARY.

Died, on February 8th, at Baltnaconnell, Killead, Mr. John Montgomery, aged 94 years.

Died, on February 11th, at Lessens, near Saintfield, Mr. Thomas Moore, aged 55 years.

Died, on the 22nd February, at his residence, Clanmurray, Dromore, William M'Clelland, Esq., aged 62 years.

Died, on the 13th February, at Mount Pottinger, Belfast, Francis Ritchie, Esq., aged 80 years.

Died, on the 12th February, at Fort-Hill, Banbridge, Jane, third daughter of the late Maurice Lindsay, Ashfield, Dromore.

Died, on January 23rd, at Newry, George Scott, Esq., aged 73 years. Mr. Scott was distinguished through life by his integrity and uncompromising adherence to the principles, religious and political, which he entertained, and he enjoyed the respect of all classes of his fellow-townsmen. On the Sunday after his funeral, the Rev. H. Alexander, the minister of the Unitarian Congregation of which for many years Mr. Scott had been a prominent and useful member, referred to the loss sustained by his removal. From the address delivered on that occasion the following is an extract:—"Our friend was a convinced and outspoken Unitarian. He knew the ground of his faith, and was at all times ready to avow it. Many of the same faith are too silent, and leave the impression that they are ashamed of the principles they hold. Another thing I would observe. Notwithstanding his outspokenness, both in politics and religion, and the marked and decided stand he took in both, he won and preserved to the last the respect and esteem of all, even of his warmest opponents. His religious opinions were unpopular. He was of 'the sect everywhere spoken against;' yet, without truckling one iota to popular outcry, he never lost the popular esteem. He enjoyed that esteem a hundredfold more than if, for the sake of public favour, he had made shipwreck of a good conscience, or gone to worship in a popular church whose doctrines he did not believe. The public are just after all, and measure men by a truer standard than we give them credit for. If any man amongst us becomes really convinced in his conscience of the popular theology, let him go to the popular churches, and I hope we all should bid him God speed. But if, from vanity, or conceit, or social aspirings, or gains of traffic, a man goes with a lie in his right hand to worship God in his solemn courts, we believe he not merely sins against God and conscience, but makes a great mistake. For when a man makes it felt that his religious principles, however unpopular, are honestly and deeply cherished, they prove in the end no bar at all to his social esteem, or worldly prosperity. They whose respect, companionship, and regard are worth having, see too little of reality and sincerity in the religious world to hold back their recognition of these virtues, though in a community different from their own. I end as I began this reference to our friend who is gone, by repeating that he was a sincere, honest, up-

right man; one of whom, more than of most men, it could in all truth be said, that though, like each one of us, with his own feibles and frailties, it was his aim and purpose 'to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God.' May words as good and true be spoken over our graves."

Died, on February 11th, at Crumlin, the Rev. John Berryhill, aged 22 years. With much sorrow we record the death of this promising young minister. Not eleven months ago, and almost before his preparatory education had been completed, he was ordained to the pastoral charge of the congregation of Moneyrea, and speedily succeeded in gaining the esteem and confidence of all classes of his hearers. His amiable disposition, genial manners, great simplicity of character, and thorough independence of mind, added to his superior natural abilities and his popularity as a preacher and a public speaker, gave promise of his rising to eminence in the church to which he belonged. Possibly the labours attendant on the ministry in so large a congregation proved too much for a constitution naturally delicate. A short time ago, his health appeared to fail, and his people considerately arranged that he should have rest for some weeks: but an attack of bronchitis, under which he had been labouring while yet he was attending to his pastoral duties, suddenly assumed a serious character, and he was with difficulty removed to his parents' residence in Crumlin, where his brief illness terminated fatally on Thursday morning, February 11th. His funeral took place on the following Saturday, and was attended by several of the leading members of the Moneyrea congregation, a number of his brother ministers, and a large concourse of friends and neighbours. The devotional services were conducted by his college companion and attached friend, the Rev. R. Cleland of Crumlin, and an impressive address was delivered by his predecessor in the ministry at Moneyrea, the Rev. John Jellie. The congregation thus bereft of a pastor, to whom, though so short time among them, they had become strongly attached, will, we trust, soon find a successor who may take his place in their affections; but the parents who by this sad event have lost their eldest child—their pride and joy—what a blank has been left in their hearts! We can only express our sincere and earnest prayer that they may find in the Word of which their departed son was a minister, that solace and hope which human sympathy, grateful though it is, and generously as it has been given, must fail to impart.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Communications for the Editor, to be addressed by post to Rev C. J. M'Alester, Holywood; or, otherwise, to 45, Arthur Street Belfast.

Orders for the work and business communications to be sent to the Agent of the Unitarian Society, 45, Arthur Street.

THE

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THE BIBLE AND THE WORKING CLASSES.*

BEFORE entering upon the consideration of this subject, it is desirable that we should seriously ask ourselves whether the very proposal of it does not savour of Bibliolatry. Why is *the Bible* proposed as *par excellence the* book which is to be presented to the working classes at all? It is recorded by one of the agents of the Bible Society, that on his recommending our Sacred Volume to the attention of the mayor of some town in Spain, near Cape Finisterre, the worthy magistrate remonstrated with him on his superstitious credulity in some such words as these: "What! You a countryman of the grand Baintham, and recommend to me that old monkish book!"† And the remonstrance was just if the Bible is to be recommended wholly or even chiefly on the ground of its mere sentiments, or its mere secular utility. There are on the very threshold many strong objections against presenting it to the working man at all. Be its constituent records true or false, they are avowedly the records of a very ancient oriental people, involving critical difficulties at the very outset which do not attach to comparatively modern works, involving the necessity for the explanation of customs and idioms with which the labouring man need not be troubled at all, and altogether presenting hindrances to the beneficial study of them, which it

* An Address read at the Forty-Eighth Social Meeting of the London District Unitarian Association, held at Radley's Hotel, Blackfriars, on Friday evening, February 26, 1864, by the Chairman, the Rev. Samuel Bache of Birmingham, in introducing for discussion, "The Bible: the best mode of presenting it to the Working Classes."

† The Alcalde of Finisterra, who had in his library the works of Jeremy Bentham.—See Borrow's Bible in Spain, Vol. ii. p. 277.

seems to me that it would be the height of folly and superstition to put in the way of the working classes,—perhaps of any class,—when the very same sentiments may be exhibited in comparatively modern writers of our own western world, and in our own native English tongue, without the need of any such doubtful criticism, or frequent and laborious explanation. This year we are, many of us, making arrangements for celebrating the tercentenary of the birth of our own immortal Shakespeare. Why should we not substitute Shakespeare for the Bible, and discuss rather the best mode of presenting his writings to the working classes? Since the request was made to me to introduce the subject of this evening's discussion to your notice, I have glanced over the works of Shakespeare, and I will venture to affirm, that there is scarce a sentiment for which the Bible might be recommended which is not to be found, expressed in such a manner as to need no learned interpreter, in his works. And there are many more recent works still in our own language which might be recommended to the working classes for the cultivation of religious knowledge and moral sentiment in preference to the Bible, if the *mere* sentiment of the Bible be its only or its characteristic recommendation.* There are innumerable works in exposition and recommendation of religious and social duty, many of a biographical character like the history of Jesus of Nazareth, many of illustrative fiction like his brief but pregnant parables, any or all of which would much more readily engage the intelligent attention of the working classes in connection with social and religious obligations, and without being attended with the difficulties with which the reading of the Bible is, for the reasons already assigned, necessarily encumbered. Why should not some or other of these be substituted for the Bible? I have read, within the last year or two, of some worshipping Society in this metropolis having come to this very conclusion as regards themselves; and I for one should be quite prepared to vindicate their proceedings on the

* For on this supposition, all the distinctive claims and histories of the Bible would be manifestly in opposition to truth and integrity, and so would tend to neutralize the beneficial influence of its devotional and moral sentiments, however excellent those sentiments might be in themselves.

assumption that the Bible is only or chiefly valuable for the religious and moral sentiments which it contains, and has no higher claim on our attention and reverence. If its incidents be all of the class of ordinary natural phenomena, if its biographies present to us no higher claims than those of even transcendent genius, if its precepts and promises rest on no firmer basis of authority than that which unassisted human reason and experience supply, then I not only freely admit, but should even strenuously maintain, that the very proposal of the subject which we have now under our consideration savours of *Bibliolatry*, (that is, of superstitious reverence for a book which is not really entitled to any special reverence at all), and ought not to be entertained for a moment by rational and thoughtful men.

It is some *specialty* of the Bible which alone can justify us, as rational and thoughtful men, in singling it out for recommendation to our working classes, and in inquiring what is the best mode of presenting it to them. What *is* this specialty? In order to answer this inquiry, I read the writings, of which, collectively, the Bible is composed, just as I would read the history and philosophy of Greece and Rome, to learn the specialty of each. I do not understand, nor can I recognise, any other processes for arriving at the sense of Scripture, than those which are required for arriving at the sense of other writings; the processes, namely, of criticism and interpretation. By these processes alone, I have no difficulty in discovering in the ancient Hebrew Scriptures at least the two following characteristic specialties:—

1. In the infancy, or perhaps even before the infancy of scientific inquiry, the wide diversities of phenomena in the different departments of nature, unavoidably suggested to men the belief in many and various and oft-times antagonistic gods. Polytheism was (rationally enough considering the data presented) the *common sense* of mankind. The Hebrew Scriptures, on the contrary, emphatically declare that "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," and throughout insist on His absolute unity, His undivided and unrivalled Deity, as the grand fundamental doctrine of all true religion.

Nor less frequently and consistently do they maintain,

2. That there is no such thing admissible under the government of this one and only God as the substitution of sacrifice or ceremony for virtue and piety. Among all other people of the earth, sacrifice and ceremony were in religion supreme.

How are these great and characteristic specialties of the Hebrew Bible to be explained? If we are to believe the account which we find in the very records which exhibit them, these glorious specialties are the immediate result of a direct and special revelation of His own existence, providence, and will to the Hebrew nation, whom God had chosen for this very purpose from among the nations of the earth, and who, as the intelligent and reverential recipients of this revelation, were marked out as peculiarly His people.

And the truth of this representation is still more fully and conclusively confirmed by the subsequent revelation of Himself through Jesus Christ. In considering the specialties of the Christian religion, we shall have occasion to observe, that as in the details already noticed, Judaism was distinguished from, and in opposition to, the prevailing polytheism, so Christianity is distinguished from, and in opposition to, the Judaism in the midst of which it originated.

The Gospel proclaims—1. That the one God and Father of the Jews is equally the one God and Father of the whole human race, Himself a spirit, and to be acceptably worshipped *only* "in spirit and in truth." 2. That Jesus of Nazareth is His Christ, proved to be from Him by miracles and signs and wonders, which God did by him in the midst of his countrymen and contemporaries, as they very well knew;* anointed, therefore, with the Holy Spirit and with power.† 3. That God is no respecter of persons. 4. That by the word of Christ we shall be judged, "whereof God hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised him from the dead."‡ And thus, 5. God gives us the victory over death and the grave through our Lord Jesus Christ.—These are specialties of Christianity, as the doctrines before mentioned were specialties of Judaism, and equally vindicate

* Acts ii. 22. † Acts x. 38. ‡ John xii. 48; Acts xvii. 31.

its claim to be received as a direct and special revelation from God himself.

How needful such a revelation was for men, the entire history of the heathen world, prior to its introduction, abundantly and conclusively proves. To notice, by way of illustration, only the last particular just mentioned. Let us remember that in one of his most sublime anticipations of the future life,* Cicero speaks of his belief in the immortality of the soul as *possibly* an error, though an error which he would not willingly have wrested from him: and that when grieving under the loss of his beloved daughter Tullia, he is constrained to accept the miserable suggestions of his friend, Servius Sulpicius, as the best consolations which it was possible for him to receive.†

Let us remember, too, the judgment of the learned writer of a work on Roman Sepulcral Inscriptions (Rev. John Kenrick)—"Upon the whole, the evidence, negative even more than positive, of the Roman Sepulcral Inscriptions, abundantly confirms the testimony of heathen as well as Christian writers to the absence of any definite and practical belief in a future state in the first three or four centuries after the Christian era." (P. 56.) This thoughtful judgment abundantly testifies to the difficulty with which the faith in a future life was accepted by the majority of men, even after the fact had been fully attested; and fully vindicates the truth of Dr. Ephraim Peabody's eloquent observations on the actual resurrection of Christ:

"I regard it as one of the internal evidences of the truth of Christianity, that while it passes by all secondary questions, it meets this greatest of questions, meets it fully, meets it in the only way in which it could be met—not with poetry, not by philosophical balancings of metaphysical proofs, not by sentimental phrases, not by vague conjectures, but by a visible fact. Up to that time, one appalling visible fact had dominated over the world—the fact of death. Death had reigned. All that had lived had died. The fathers were dead, sages were dead, oppressors and oppressed, the evil and the good were dead. The earth was one vast cemetery, and not one of its graves had been broken. Men might reason and hope and fear and half-believe; but always these half-beliefs were confronted by the visible fact from which there was no escape. The rising hope was chilled and frozen by a wind that blew across the place of graves. There was the inexorable fact of death, and

* De Senectute, c. 23. † Ad Diversos, iv. 5, 6.

nothing to meet it. It tyrannized over the reason more even than over the imagination of men. No voice had spoken from the closing tomb, no voice from the heavens. There was only silence above and death below. Christianity met that fact by the only evidence by which it could be met: it met the scepticism of the senses by an evidence addressed to the senses,—by the resurrection from the dead. We talk of spirituality as if it did not need this visible evidence. Let us thank God that he is more merciful than our folly asks. Somehow here our souls are connected with the body, and high as we may soar in faith, the highest flight must start from the earth. And God has given just the evidence we need for the immortal life, in the resurrection of Christ. Without this, the teaching of Christ would have been but one more conjecture added to the thousand preceding conjectures of wise and good men. It was his visible resurrection that broke the horrible spell which had benumbed the faith of man. It was his resurrection which reared over the cemetery of the generations of the dead, the symbol of immortal hope. I do not mean to say that there is not much in nature to *suggest* the idea of a future existence. But suggestion and hope are not proof or belief. No fact in history is more certain than that Christendom owes its belief in immortality to the fact that one clothed in supernatural power and wisdom and goodness, not only taught the doctrine of immortality, but died and was visibly raised from the dead." *

Thus we come distinctly and conclusively to the specialty of the Bible as containing (what no other book in the world does) the records of a special and direct revelation from God, and of the evidences by which that revelation was, and still is, attested. It has been more than suggested, by some writers of our own day, that these evidences had better be dispensed with. "Evidences of Christianity," said Coleridge, "I am weary of the word. Make a man feel the want of Christianity, its adaptation to his whole moral, spiritual, and intellectual nature, and Christianity will be its own evidence." Thus the only foundation of religious conviction is made to be our individual personal feeling. See what may result from the adoption of this principle. A Mohammedan carpenter at Aleppo is recorded, by Mr. Francis William Newman, to have spoken to the following effect: "I will tell you, Sir, how the case stands. God has given you English a great many good gifts. You make fine ships and sharp penknives, and good cloth and cottons, and you have rich nobles and brave soldiers, and you write and print many learned books (dictionaries and

* Christian Days and Thoughts, pp. 219—221.

grammars):—all this is of God. But there is one thing that God has withheld from *you*, and has revealed to *us;* and that is, the knowledge of the true religion by which one may be saved."* It may be truly alleged, that this remark was in reply to Mr. Newman's fruitless endeavour to vindicate the authenticity of our Gospels. It was so; but the failure of that endeavour, in this individual instance, surely affords no reason whatever for relinquishing as worthless the historical verity, and relying exclusively on an appeal to personal consciousness, which also was equally fruitless. God never *forces* conviction, and, therefore, even arguments intrinsically the most cogent *may* fail; but surely that is no reason at all why they who feel their cogency should consent to cast them aside as useless. Coleridge, who did this very thing, himself furnished, in his own person, the strongest proof of its folly. In his earlier life, he had so far attained to those views of divine truth which we derive from what we deem the just and rational interpretation of Scripture, that he was actually invited to become the minister of the Anti-Trinitarian Society of Christians in Shrewsbury, and had, I believe, accepted the invitation, though, from some circumstances, he never fulfilled the engagement. Some years ago I read a letter, in Coleridge's own handwriting, which, not long before his death, he had written to a friend of mine, in which he urged the necessity of faith in the Trinity as essential to salvation, and urged it with all the unreasoning confidence of the Mohammedan carpenter already mentioned. Such was the consequence of becoming weary of the *evidences* of Christianity. And that is the reason why I still hold to the obligation of our maintaining the reality of those special proofs, which God, in his mercy, vouchsafed to the teachers immediately sent by him, and especially to the last and greatest, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which proofs, in connection with Christ (says a writer in the *Inquirer*, September 5, 1863, p. 570), "are essential parts of the Gospel, so closely inwrought with the whole divine fabric that no process has yet been suggested by which they can be separated." No! nor, in my judgment, ever will be.

* Phases of Faith, by F. W. Newman, p. 32.

The recent attempt of M. Renan to present a biography of Jesus of Nazareth, *not* as the Christ, and therefore *not* as accompanied by any miraculous attestations to his divine mission, is, in my judgment, *a demonstration*, so far as it goes, of the impossibility of eliminating the miracles from the life of Christ. My knowledge of his work is chiefly derived from an article in the *National Review*, though I have taken a hasty survey of the original. By setting aside the miracles of Jesus, he is so far from exhibiting him as a model man, that he presents him as undergoing a continual moral deterioration, from the very time of his first introduction to John the Baptist (that is, throughout the whole of his own personal ministry),—conniving at what he knew to be a fraud in support of his own unwarrantable claims, in the instance of the raising of Lazarus, and ultimately accepting death, even with all the attendant agonies of crucifixion, as the only escape open to him from the inextricable perplexities in which he had involved himself, by his fanatical ambition to be recognised as the Jewish Messiah. "Our English Christianity" (well writes a most clear-sighted and earnest reviewer of the work in the *Christian Reformer*, 1863, p. 590) "may thank M. Renan for two things—the one designed, the other not—for the vividness with which he has brought the scenes of Galilee to view, assisting us to make the Gospel history real and fresh, and for the palpable unsuccess of his attempt to explain the Gospel on naturalistic principles. For ourselves, we have before now studied the evidences of Christianity in the failure of 'philosophy' to explain its facts. *There are no more convincing evidences of a miraculous Gospel.*"

You see then what, according to my view of it, that Bible is which we propose to present to the working classes, and why it deserves this special selection. Two questions yet remain to be considered, which I shall answer very briefly.

1. Why are the working classes specially contemplated? Because, I presume, they have received the Bible (if they have received it at all) at second hand through the orthodox, in connexion with many dogmas which we reject as unscriptural as well as irrational; and we must endeavour to show them how to interpret it with common

sense. Are there no other classes, let me ask, who are equally in need of this recommendation? Do the aristocracy of rank, of wealth, of fashion, and vast numbers of men in communion with our Established Church, receive the Bible intelligently and reverentially and practically as it ought to be received? I merely ask the question, leaving you to answer it.

2. And if I farther ask, in conclusion, How are we to present the Bible to others? I must lay it down as an indispensable pre-requisite that we show them that we do indeed *most* highly value it ourselves, and this on account of its characteristic specialties, both of revelation and of testimony. Our first business, then, must be to study it carefully ourselves. It used to be said that there is no royal road to geometry; and so, *à fortiori*, there is certainly no royal road to this sublimest knowledge. In recommending the Bible to the working classes, we are not at liberty to form a detached creed of its moral precepts any more than of its religious doctrines. Both these classes of truths are alike bound up in the Gospel with the real history and life of Christ. Unless we maintain the connection, we shall never know ourselves or enable others to know *their divine authority*, and though we may become mystical *Nazarenes*, shall never become intelligent and consistent *Christians*.

It always appears to me from *my* point of view—(I presume not to judge others or to judge *for* others)—equal folly and ingratitude to have recourse to mere *à priori* methods of argumentation, to the neglect of that clear revelation of God's character and will which we have in the Bible, especially in the Gospel of Christ. To this Gospel, as it is clearly and consistently set forth, notwithstanding many natural and unavoidable circumstantial diversities, in the writings of the four Evangelists, I would earnestly recommend that attention be first and chiefly directed. My own practice has been, for years past, to go through these Gospels *seriatim* with members of my congregation chiefly belonging to the very class which we are now considering, explaining every portion as we read it, and freely inviting and answering their questions. It is not for me, perhaps, to say what the result has been to them. I may at least augur favourably

from their punctual, regular, and persevering attendance and attention, week after week: but I can unequivocally affirm for myself, that my own convictions of the historical verity of our Gospels have been greatly strengthened, that I feel more deeply impressed than ever with the solemn obligation of endeavouring, as I have opportunity, to vindicate their claim to be received as containing the oracles of the living God, more anxious than ever to approve myself a faithful steward of God's manifold grace, and to evince my unfeigned and ever increasing reverence for the word which Christ has spoken, as that which, on his authority I am fully persuaded, will judge me at the last day.

In reply, then, to the question, What is the best mode of presenting the Bible to the working classes? I say, Let us present it as what it really is—a volume containing the records of a divine revelation and the testimonies to its authority; which testimonies need not, however, be made the subjects of any formal vindication, until they are actually called in question. Let us begin with the detailed perusal and explanation of our Saviour's life, and this, when we have ourselves acquired a clear, consistent, intelligent conviction of its substantial truth as the life of "a teacher come from God" (John iii. 2), *but not till then.* When we are thus qualified to engage in this work, we need not regard the cry of *Bibliolatry* which is so often raised, and which, as addressed to members of our Unitarian Christian Churches, has nothing in it but a delusive and dangerous *flattery;* seeing that the existing tendency of our Churches lies not at all in this direction; perhaps it is rather in the opposite direction. Let us freely and fearlessly devote ourselves to this work of faith and labour of love as God shall give us ability and opportunity, and we may be assured that, if we persevere and abound in it, our labour in the Lord shall not finally prove in vain.

CHRISTIAN GIVING.

"Make a worthy effort. One said to me, 'I will never miss what I give.' Well, I think very little of the charity that a man does not miss. There is no charity worthy of the name, acceptable to God, and deserving the admiration of men, that is not a burden. There is no charity worth asking or giving that is not an act of self-denial. Now, do not give in such a way as that you will never miss it—give in such a way as that you *will* miss it; miss it next week, next month, and be obliged to be saving and careful to make up for it. That is the charity I love. For what says Christ—'If any man would be my disciple, let him take up his cross and deny himself, and follow me.' And oh, brethren, in one word, let us act in everything so as never to deny Christ, but to deny ourselves. Live not for enjoyment; live for employment. Let us live for Christ on earth, and we will live with Him for ever in heaven."—Dr. Guthrie.

It is sometimes said that to give *money* for charitable purposes is an easy thing compared to the giving of time, thought, affection, and unceasing personal exertion; and no doubt there are many who are glad to compound with their consciences for withholding the latter by a large bestowal of the former. Others again, who really are debarred by circumstances from engaging in works of public usefulness, lend a willing aid from their purses, while they cheer by their sympathy those who toil under the burden and heat of the day; and some there are, it must be admitted, who give from merely worldly motives; they have more money than they know what to do with, and by a few splendid donations may secure a reputation for liberality at a very cheap rate. It will generally be found, however, that those persons whose names are constantly found on subscription lists for every benevolent enterprise, be it fashionable or the reverse, give a great deal besides their money,—they give enlarged sympathy, enlightened judgment, and the weight of their social influence. It will also be found that among earnest workers,—among those who spend *themselves* in doing good,—there is money contributed at the cost of self-denial, quite unimagined by those who are content to look on complacently from a distance upon such obscure and to them uninteresting fields of labour.

It is true, as Dr. Guthrie observes, that the charity is worth little which a man does not miss; and be it remembered, that those very funds not to be *missed* from the

rich man's hoards entail much self-devotion on the part of their dispensers. The poor can be benefited only through unselfish, loving effort—only through the influence of spiritual affections, to which the merely "rich in this world's goods" must remain strangers.

There is, it is to be feared, a numerous class who withhold *both* their money and their exertions. "Money!" they say; really they are very sorry, but they have none to spare,—in other words, only enough to keep themselves extremely comfortable; and as to exertion, they do not feel any vocation in that line; it is all very well for those who have a taste for that sort of thing, &c. What! are not all called to walk worthy of *one* high and holy vocation, not as a matter of taste, but "according to the grace given" to them? and is it not required of us, amidst "diversities of gifts," to manifest "the same spirit?"

The rich may give from various motives, as we have said before, and, if they choose, with little or no self-denial; but for those in humbler walks of life, their alms must spring from the true source. They cannot give ostentatiously, but their small and truly generous offerings have produced incalculable benefits, and if multiplied in proportion to the numbers who profess discipleship to One who went about doing good, and was poor that we might be rich, the world would soon witness a more rapid progress in moral and social improvement. Is it not because we are *of little faith* that more is not done? We are ready to grant that the diffusion of pure Gospel truth is both the duty and the interest of society. We assemble ourselves together, Sunday after Sunday, in acknowledgment of the supremacy of the spiritual life and the nobleness of Christian duty, but we are not willing to stake much upon these sublime truths; and having abundantly fortified and enriched the outward and temporal life, practically deem the parings, as it were, which fall from our affluence, quite enough to devote to objects so transcendental as diminishing the misery and sin of our brethren, and bringing them to sit, clothed and in their right mind, at the feet of Jesus!

Oh! shall we not listen to that divine voice, still urging us on to higher paths of duty with the solemn question, "What do ye more than others?" If we cannot make

ourselves conspicuous by our splendid offerings to the treasuries of the Lord, we can yet testify our allegiance to Christ by those lesser gifts which our daily self-control, and moderation in the pleasures of this life, shall enable us to give, even out of our penury, towards the carrying on of that great work which He came to accomplish in the world. Thus we shall prove more and more that Christian giving is not all self-denial,—that duty undertaken in faith becomes privilege to our enlarging love; and let us not forget that He who said, "Take up the cross," gave also the encouraging promise contained in these memorable words: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again."

"EVEN THE NIGHT SHALL BE LIGHT ABOUT THEE."

'Tis gone, that bright and orbed blaze,
Fast fading from our wistful gaze;
Yon mantling cloud has hid from sight
The last faint pulse of quivering light.

Sun of my soul, for ever near!
It is not night, if thou be here:
Oh, may no earth-born cloud arise
To hide thee from thy servant's eyes.

When round thy wondrous works below
My searching rapturous glance I throw,
Let not my heart within me burn,
Except in all I thee discern.

Abide with me from morn till eve,
For without thee I cannot live:
Abide with me when night is nigh,
For without thee I dare not die.

Come near and bless us when we wake,
Ere through the world our way we take:
Till in the ocean of thy love
We lose ourselves in heaven above.—KEBLE.

A CONFESSOR OF THE PRESENT CENTURY.

THE present extraordinary condition of the Established Church of England and Ireland, and the very peculiar and anomalous position occupied by many of her most distinguished clergy, in relation to the majority of the doctrines so long considered orthodox and essential by the Church, and to the measure of obligation entailed upon them by their ordination vows, seems a not inappropriate opportunity for soliciting attention to the subject of the following brief notice.

It is not our intention to express either approval or disapproval of the conduct of the now celebrated authors of *Essays and Reviews*, and their numerours sympathisers amongst the clergy of the so-called "Broad Church." It may or may not be that they judge rightly that their power and influence for reforming the Church of England, and restoring to her the simplicity of Gospel doctrine, of which she has been so long deprived, will be much greater by their remaining within her communion, even at the risk of tampering in some degree with the clear deliverance of conscience (notwithstanding that the "letter of the law" may have declared in their favour), than by leaving her communion, and encountering the unpopularity of Dissent, to find the circle of their immediate influence—literary, social, and ecclesiastical—greatly diminished, their learning and labours unrewarded, their lecture-rooms and preaching-houses unfilled, and their works unread. It may or may not be that the promotion of the interests and the reform of a Church organization constitute a more binding duty on the sworn minister of Christ's Gospel, than the freely giving up all,—sacrificing worldly position, emoluments, apparent influence, Church fellowship,—all, to follow, unfearing and unquestioning, the sacred dictates of Holy Truth. It is not for us to pass judgment upon them; "to their own Master they must stand or fall." But it is at least allowable for us to call to mind the conduct, in our own times, and under similar circumstances, of one who was also a distinguished son of the same Church—one who was the equal of any of these men in birth, worldly position and circumstances, talent,

education, and actual and prospective influence and distinction.

The late Rev. George Armstrong,* Bristol, in whose death, some years ago, the Unitarian Church lost one of its brightest ornaments, and the sacred cause of truth a most zealous and uncompromising advocate, was born at Drogheda, in the year 1792. His parents were of good family and position, and in comparative affluence; and, like all his connexions, were members of the Church of England. Having received a careful early training and liberal education, he graduated with distinction in Trinity College, Dublin, intending to prepare for the Bar, which he had chosen for his profession. He himself, in a letter to a friend in after life, thus graphically describes the reasons which led to his relinquishing the Bar for the Church, and the unfavourable influence exercised by Orthodoxy over his youthful mind:—

"They (the Orthodox party,) were my first prompters to the infidelity of those youthful years, of which the painful, but not wholly useless experience is traceable, I suppose, in most men's lives. Their doctrines were ever to me revolting to irritation. There was nothing in them to soothe, attract, conciliate; my boyish years of college life could draw from them no help in their struggle with youthful sins and worldly vanities. 'You must resign the intellect or be lost, seek for evidence through enmity with reason—or you are on the way to the place of the doomed.' And they went on, Sunday after Sunday, through all the Dublin circles in which I then moved, and in one form or another, week-day after week-day, in the same dreary round of violation of principles which I felt to be true, and to my further and further repulsion from the goal of *peace* and *light* which I equally felt to be all-important.

"When these deadly mischiefs, thanks to them and their popular preachers, and their pious women not a few, were too deeply seated not to leave terrible marks of their pressure on the moral and internal character, and some precious years were already surrendered to the calls of youthful dissipation and sin, my better star began to peer in the horizon.

"Bishop Watson's replies to Gibbon and Tom Paine aroused my thought and gratified my intellect. Paley's *temperate* yet earnest sermons came in at the happy moment to help the process. His Natural Theology led further on in the consoling and joyous

* A Memoir of the late Rev. George Armstrong, formerly Incumbent of Bangor, in the Diocese of Down, and latterly one of the Ministers of Lewin's Mead Chapel, Bristol, with Extracts from his Journals and Correspondence. By Robert Henderson, his Literary Executor. London: Whitfield. 1859.

way to a rational Christianity based on supernatural guarantees; and his Christian Evidences, with Hoadly, Locke, and Jortin, did the rest. I was now a thoughtful, happy, consistent Christian. But, alas! my trials were not yet over. I was now under the influence of re-action, and had become 'serious'; so much so, indeed, as to take into my hands, with an alacrity which nothing else could account for, after such a mortal experience as mine, the works of Wilberforce and H. Moore, at that time in the full tide of popularity. And though not to their doctrinal, certainly to the full extent of their *practical* requirements, I was among the number of their most enthusiastic admirers and converts. In this condition the Church presented itself as my proper and most congenial calling; till then the Bar having been marked out as the path of my professional life. Ambition's voice was now completely hushed; my tastes had taken another direction. Religion's peaceful retirement and useful duties filled up in prospect the future and happy years, few or many, during which I might be spared to minister in her service. I began to prepare for orders," &c.

And so he goes on to tell of his ordination to a curacy in the diocese of Meath, which, however, he soon resigned, on his marriage with a lady by whom he acquired considerable property, and whose affairs obliged him to reside for some time in Dublin. Here, and in his pleasant country-house, he spent several following years, pursuing his theological and other literary studies, and frequently preaching and performing other ministerial duties for his clerical neighbours and friends, but with an ever-growing distaste towards the doctrines of the Church, and doubts as to their Scriptural and intrinsic truth. But at length, persuaded by the earnest solicitations of many friends, and hoping to find in the active discharge of the duties of his high calling, and in watching over the spiritual interests of a large parish, a relief from the oppression, if not a practical solution of the mental difficulties which he experienced, he so far overcame his unmatured scruples, and silenced his distrusting thoughts, as to accept the important incumbency of Bangor, in the diocese of Down, under the auspices of its then bishop, Dr. Mant.

Here a most desirable prospect of extensive and increasing honour and usefulness seemed to have opened for Mr. Armstrong. Comparatively prosperous and easy in his worldly circumstances,—possessing a fine glebe-house and farm,—surrounded by a large family connection, and a still larger circle of influential friends,—and enjoying the choicest society of his neighbourhood,—with

talents and attainments of a very high order,—with wondrous facility and power as a writer,—with great popular gifts as a pulpit and general orator,—with a happy combination of great clear-mindedness, zeal, amiability, and integrity, and many other qualities of head and heart calculated to adorn and dignify the character and promote the usefulness of the ministerial life, and with every reason to anticipate speedy and eventually high preferment in the the Church,—surely "his lines had fallen to him in pleasant places," and his were to be the "green pastures" and the "still waters" of peace!

To most men it would have proved so, but Mr. Armstrong's mind was cast in no common mould; and, happily, the intense love of *truth*, by which he was distinguished, was not only in him united to superior mental faculties for its discovery and elucidation, but also to such rare singleness, honesty, and firmness of purpose, and such high sense of duty, as gave to it "a free course," and allowed it to display to the full its features of majestic beauty in his life and conduct.

One thing was still lacking to his position, which, to him, more than counterbalanced all its advantages—"liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience." The leaven which had been long working, together with the tendency of all his studies, disinclined him more and more towards the doctrines and the restrictions of the church; but the circumstance that completed his alienation will be best described in his own words—

"I liked my honoured and useful position, but I had too much light to reconcile myself to the constrained services by which this outward honour and usefulness were to be available; and, oh! unlucky accident, a Belfast edition of Channing's discourse on the Ordination of Ezra Stiles Gannet, left me more tormentingly dissatisfied than ever. From that hour I was a gone man; it only remained for circumstance and opportunity to determine when I should release myself from obligations which I was unable to fulfil, and abandon once and for all allegiance to a system that weighed down my soul's freedom, which was its life, and fettered my thoughts as they would ever and anon soar upwards to the source of light and truth and spiritual joy."

Strange! that he never seems to have thought of adopting the obvious expedient which we have lately

seen to be so singularly successful—of retaining his perferment at all risks, fully preaching and publishing his views, however opposed to those generally taught in the Church, explaining and defending his subscription to the Articles and his Ordination Vows on purely legal and technical grounds, and leaving it to those in the Church who might be dissatisfied with him *to put him out if they could!* But "the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light."

Mr. Armstrong, little more than two years after his induction, *resigned his living*, in simple obedience to the dictates of conscience, and in 1826, retired with his wife and family to his former country residence of Bingfield, in County Cavan. Here he engaged largely in agricultural pursuits, and during the ten following years divided his time between this his chosen home, the houses of several family connections, and a residence in or near Dublin. During this period the care of his rising family, the keeping up and increasing of his literary attainments, and the most chivalrous devotion to every public movement that tended to promote any genuine reform, freedom, or progress, whether in the political, social, or religious world, at home and abroad; these and such like occupations engaged his time and thoughts. He threw himself, heart and soul, into the questions of Roman Catholic Emancipation and National Education. He became the friend and most intimate correspondent of Dr. Channing, and formed an acquaintance, which afterwards ripened into intimacy, with many other distinguished American Unitarians. The powerful effect of his letters to the celebrated Blanco White, who, admiring his talents, had written to him with the object of "turning him from the error of his ways, and reconciling him to the Established Church," may be judged from the fact, that Mr. White afterwards acknowledged that they were the chief cause that led him to *resign his own connexion* with that Church, and, with it, the honour and advantage of sharing the home, the companionship, and ultimately the friendship, of Archbishop Whately! He published at this time several works which were most favourably received, and the pages of *The Examiner*, *The Westminster Review*, *Tait's Magazine*, and other high-class periodicals, were

willingly opened to his talented and spirit-stirring contributions.

In 1836, the lamented death of Mrs. Armstrong plunged her husband into the deepest affliction; and as the best means of rousing himself, he naturally began to look out for some fixed and regular employment, suited to his habits and feelings. But where was he to turn? The Established Church has taken good care not to leave open the avenues of political, commercial, or other secular or professional life to any recreants amongst her clerical sons. "Once a priest, still a priest" effectually bars their entrance to all. Mr. Armstrong, as the only suitable opening apparent, applied for the Secretaryship of the National Board of Education, to Archbishop Whately, who informed him that his being a *clergyman* would be an insuperable objection to his appointment.

At this time he became more intimate with the Unitarians of Dublin, and seems to have definitely "cast in his lot" with them.

And now, behold the Rector of Bangor, the Squire of Bingfield, the man of social position and influence, the accomplished student and philosopher, the talented writer and speaker, in the maturity of his life, humbly taking his way to a meeting of the little Unitarian Synod of Munster, held in a private house in Dublin; and there asking and receiving "licence to preach the Gospel" in its connection! And follow him farther, as he travels down to preach his trial sermon, as a candidate for the small Congregation of Summerhill, in County Meath, to an audience of twenty-five souls! How many would look upon him with contemptuous pity! how many more with unsparing reproach! But "Wisdom is justified of her children!"

So great a sacrifice however was not to be permitted; for whilst Mr. Armstrong was faithfully preparing to accept a call from Summerhill, an invitation, through the intervention of a distinguished Unitarian friend in Dublin, reached him from the important Congregation of Lewin's Mead, Bristol, to preach there, with a view to being chosen co-pastor to the celebrated Dr. Lant Carpenter. This he accepted, and in due time was installed as a Unitarian minister in Bristol, where he continued till the

close of his honoured and useful life. But following the course of the interesting memoir from which the materials of this sketch have been drawn, we shall reserve, for continuation in a "second part," the subject of Mr. Armstrong's Life and Ministry in Bristol. C.

RECENT OVATION AT BALLYCLARE.

In our intelligence pages will be found a condensed report of the proceedings at a soiree lately held in the Old Meeting-house of Ballyclare, ostensibly, as the Chairman informs us, to do honour to the Rev. John Hall and his bride, but really, as the event proved, to celebrate the recent victory in the law courts, and to afford certain ministers an opportunity of declaiming on the hackneyed and much-abused theme of "religious liberty," and possibly of convincing some whom, by a free gift of tickets, they had beguiled to their entertainment, that they were genuine lovers of the Scriptures—Christians in the true sense of the word, and one with the leaders of the Calvinistic Church in the great principles of the Gospel. Mr. Hall, whom the Chairman alleged it was a chief object of the meeting to honour, was coolly shoved aside, and not suffered to open his mouth, even to thank the company for the compliment which they intended for him, or to utter a syllable in behalf of that cause of which, if we are to believe the reports that have appeared from time to time in the English Unitarian papers, he was so able and distinguished a defender. The chairman was Mr. James Andrews, Solicitor, Belfast, who was well entitled to such a grateful acknowledgment of his services, as he gave much thought and labour to the preparation of the case lately heard before the Master of the Rolls, and as, ever since the "no question" principle was agitated in our churches, he has been one of its most earnest and reckless supporters. Religious liberty, in his mind, is the liberty of undertaking the charge of a Christian congregation, no matter how little of Christianity the candidate may hold—though he should disbelieve its most sacred truths, and scoff at its holiest rites.

The chief speaker of the evening was the Rev. John

Porter, whom we find responding at some length to *three* important sentiments. He first speaks to "The Lord-Lieutenant, and Prosperity to Ireland." He tells the meeting that he is "a common man, and cannot be the idolator of any man living;" and then, his spirit of independence taking a mighty sweep, he declares that "the only person in the whole universe before whom he would bow the knee is Queen Victoria!" Her Majesty should be honoured by so high a distinction; but if homage is due to the Sovereign, why withhold it from her viceroy? Perhaps Mr. Porter is one of those who have leagued themselves to get rid of the Lord-Lieutenancy, and abolish the minor court that is held in Dublin Castle. But it does seem extraordinary that, while his free soul recoils from the thought of doing homage to the Chief Ruler of Ireland, for Ireland itself he has no word of gratulation, kindness, or sympathy. In the free range which he takes of the universe, his patriotic feelings seem entirely to have evaporated!

We find Mr. Porter rising a second time, to speak in behalf of the Presbytery of Antrim; and in referring to the principles of that body at its formation, we find him, by a natural enough mistake, representing the opinions of himself and his co-presbyters as those which were held by the founders of the body. He says—"They had found that there was no end to differences of opinion, and they therefore had resolved that every man should hold his own opinion. They had said that they, as ministers, after knowing that a man was educated, &c., would only ask, 'Do you consider the Scriptures as the only rule and guide of faith?'" The original principles of the Presbytery were very different. Mr. Haliday, one of its most distinguished founders, writing in vindication of Non-subscription, as then understood, says:—

"Neither is it my opinion that ministers are obliged immediately to license or ordain any candidate for the ministry if he shall acknowledge the Scriptures to be the Word of God. I think that they may demand some rational satisfaction that the person whom they ordain understands the Christian doctrine, and is apt to teach; which may be had by examining the person to be ordained, and by allowing him to preach before his ordainers, concerning the most important subjects; or to draw up in his own words an account of the principles and grounds of his faith."

But, even if only such a question were asked, it would be enough to exclude some from the Church, for there have been good and Christian men who could not honestly answer it in the affirmative, as they believed that some authorized exposition of the Scripture doctrine was important to regulate the Church's faith. Such was the opinion of the great majority of the Presbyterian ministers of Ireland when the Presbytery of Antrim was formed, and such is the opinion of the vast body of the Presbyterian ministers now, including Dr. Cooke and Dr. Morgan, with whom Mr. Porter seems so anxious to fraternize. And if this "one question" would exclude many in one direction, might it not exclude some in the opposite? There may be some ministers who do not regard the Scriptures as their "sole rule of faith." They would except certain portions as not binding on them, and we think they would do right; for certainly the obligations as to days and meats, imposed on the Jews, are not binding on us; nor is the spirit of denunciation breathed at times in the Psalms, to influence the Christian, though sometimes unhappily it does. But others may go farther, and except those teachings of the New Testament which represent Christ as specially sent, and divinely appointed. If men, with the sceptic's knife, cut off every reference to the divine and the supernatural from the sacred narrative, how can they honestly say that they take the *Scriptures* as their rule of faith? We find at this Ballyclare celebration one young minister, who recently completed his studies at Manchester College, London, plainly declaring, —"Christ's life was just a revelation of God to man: God had prepared man's heart to feel that life without miracles. *If miracles were required, he would not believe in it.*" We commend the Rev. William Smyth's plainness of speech, but, presuming that when he was ordained over the fragment of the Carrickfergus Congregation that attached itself to the Presbytery of Antrim, he declared that he took "the *Scriptures* as his sole rule of faith," we must strongly condemn his want of principle. His answer was either directly false, or else he must have used the term "Scriptures" in a sense of his own, not understood by the people, and his reply must thus have been grossly deceptive. What Mr. Porter may mean by

the "Scriptures," when he declares that he takes them as his rule of faith, we have no means of determining; but of this we are sure, that all his rhetorical flourishes about the Scriptures and the Word of God are only so much frothy declamation—a mere "blowing of bubbles" in the Old Meeting-house of Ballyclare,—calculated to beguile the young and unthinking, but most offensive to reflecting minds, whatever may be the party to which they belong.

We are informed by Mr. Porter that in old times Dr. Hanna, Dr. Cooke, and others, used to preach in the meeting-houses of the Antrim Presbytery. Quite true; and we have ourselves heard Mr. Porter preach in Dr. Hanna's meeting-house: but it should be remembered that he was a licentiate of a Presbytery of the General Synod, and that at that time the distinction was not so sharply marked between the two parties, as soon after it was. The discussion in the General Synod, resulting in the Remonstrant secession, completely separated the Subscribing and Non-Subscribing sections, and we do not afterwards find that they interchanged pulpits. We are aware that Mr. Porter invited Mr. Spurgeon to preach in his pulpit, and now he makes the same offer to Dr. Cooke; but if he would lead the public thus to believe that there is no important difference between their views and his, he is contradicting his own pulpit instructions, and the tenor of his ministry in Belfast for more than thirty years. It is questionable taste in Mr. Porter to adduce the circumstance of his having performed a marriage in Dr. Cooke's church, to illustrate the identity of their Christian principles. We have ourselves performed funeral services and celebrated marriages in the churches of the General Assembly; but we would consider it very unbecoming to take advantage of the courtesy of our Calvinistic brethren, and make it an argument for showing that there is little difference between us.

Mr. Porter boasts of his party having gained a victory not only for Mr. Hall and the Ballyclare Congregation, but for all the clergy of the Presbyterian Church; and he informs us that this is the confession of all the ministers with whom he has conversed. For Mr. Hall they have, indeed, secured the meeting-house and manse at Ballyclare; but the congregation is gone, and his eloquence

and zeal will be spent on empty pews. One minister of the General Assembly we have been told of, who expressed much sympathy with Mr. Hall, in his obstinate refusal to comply with the reasonable request of his people; but his motives in thus acting have been regarded with suspicion. Other ministers may have been pleased to find that the law gives them absolute power to become the tyrants of their flocks; but we do not believe that there is any minister of any church, who values the divine authority of revelation, or respects the rights of the laity, who does not condemn the principles advocated and the course pursued by Mr. Hall and his co-presbyters.

Mr. Porter's third speech is made in responding to the sentiment,—"The clergy and laity who have aided us in our recent struggle,"—and is chiefly remarkable for an important disclosure which he makes towards the end of it, and which has afforded us an opportunity of exposing a gross misrepresentation made through him. We stated in our July number that "an unworthy effort had been made to represent the dissatisfied party at Ballyclare as inconsiderable," and that "we had been informed that a private letter was written to an influential minister in England, stating that of the 83 names attached to the Resolution of Feb. 2, 1862, [in favour of withdrawing from the jurisdiction of the Presbytery of Antrim,] 56 were fraudulently added." We learn, from Mr. Porter's speech, that the Rev. James Martineau was the English minister written to, and that he was himself the author of the letter. We have shown, in a brief notice in our last number, that although Mr. Porter denounces our statement as false, the letter he has given from Mr. Martineau fully confirms everything we said; and we now return to the subject to show that the report given by Mr. Porter to Mr. Martineau, on the authority, it appears, of the legal adviser of the Presbytery, is entirely incorrect. In a printed memorial, drawn up with much care, the Resolution referred to was introduced, and the names of the parties signing it were given. Mr. Martineau, to whom a copy of this memorial had been sent, writes to Mr. Porter to know how the information he had received, that the majority of the Congregation

adhered to Mr. Hall, could be reconciled with so numerously signed a resolution; and the ready reply, suggested by "the legal adviser," was, that of the 83 names, 56 *had no right to be there!* What pains, we should like to know, did Mr. Porter or "the legal adviser" take to know the truth, before that reply to Mr. Martineau's reasonable inquiry was penned? We challenge "the legal adviser of the Presbytery" to substantiate this allegation, which, made for a purpose in a private letter, has most fortunately been brought to light. We know that he cannot do so. It is a mere fiction, or, at best, a legal quibble. And on this point let us add that Mr. Hall has written what is demonstrably incorrect. He informs the Registrar of Marriages, in a letter dated March 13, 1862, that "the *majority of the Congregation* protested against the right of any persons to withdraw the Congregation from the body with which it had been connected for 140 years;" while, to a resolution in favour of withdrawing, adopted at the meeting held on Feb. 2, 1862, 83 signatures, *forming greatly the majority of those entitled to vote*, had been attached. This written misstatement of Mr. Hall, and another contained in a letter of his to the *Inquirer*, published June 6, 1862, alleging that, till the late movement in the Presbytery, his Congregation was united, while, as all the members of the Presbytery know, there was previously serious disunion among them, painfully show how, in subserving the interests of party, truth is sometimes overlooked.

The Rev. Thomas Smyth, in responding to "Our Friends in the Remonstrant Synod," advocated the "Sufficiency of the Scriptures" as a simple test which would unite the various sections of Non-Subscribers; but in doing so he was retrograding from the position he seemed a year ago to advocate. Then, from having been strongly conservative in his theological views, and from regarding with alarm the extreme opinions advocated in some Unitarian pulpits in England, he suddenly rushed into the extreme of liberalism, and contended for entire non-interference with congregations on the part of the Presbytery, alleging that "men are no longer disposed to lay stress upon the authority of a book, however sacred it may be considered!" Possibly, however, in his Ballyclare speech he employs

"Scriptures" in its latest acceptation, to mean anything or nothing, as may suit the case.

It is worthy of remark, in concluding this brief review of the late exhibition in the Old Meeting-house of Ballyclare, that the *London Inquirer* has taken no notice of it—has not even given a brief paragraph intimating that such a meeting was held. How comes this mysterious silence? We know that that paper was the persevering apologist of Mr. Hall and his party, and exhibited the most glaring partiality in dealing with our Irish disagreements. Even when it had announced that its columns were closed against any further communication on the subject, and when letters of explanation or defence, sent from the opposite side, were refused insertion, some paragraph or letter in praise of the "liberal party" was sent to it, and suddenly its columns were re-opened. Yet of this great ovation it gives us not a line of intelligence! The truth, we believe, is, that it was unwilling to exhibit to discerning English readers the trashy and offensive stuff which, in the shape of speech-making, was so freely distributed to the motley gathering at this Ballyclare Soiree.

INTELLIGENCE.

SOIREE IN THE OLD MEETING-HOUSE, BALLYCLARE.

On Thursday evening, February 25, a soiree was held in the Old Meeting-house, Ballyclare. The attendance was large, and included several ministers of the Presbytery of Antrim. After tea, on the motion of the Rev. John Hall, James Andrews, Esq., Solicitor, Belfast, was called to the chair. After some introductory remarks, the chairman said—I am inclined to ask myself why I am placed in this position, and the only answer I can give, whether it may be considered eulogistic on my part or not, is that I have been the constant advocate of civil and religious liberty. I have stood by it through good report and through bad report, and against a great deal of obloquy and a good deal of opposition; and I may congratulate yourselves and myself on the advance it has made, and the proud position which it occupies at the present time. There are a great and vast number of people who exclaim about the right of "private judgment," and we have often found that their profession and their practice are widely different. The right of private judg-

ment, as I look upon it, is that which every man ought to yield to his fellow-men, allowing all others to think and act for themselves as he does for himself. Unfortunately, in the present time, it is too much the practice for people who pretend to advocate the right of private judgment to say they will allow it to you up to their standard; but woe to you if you go beyond it. I find one of the principal objects of this meeting is to do honour to the worthy pastor of this congregation and to his worthy lady; and although he is late in taking to himself a partner in the bonds of matrimony, we hope she may be the means of promoting—as ladies always have the power of doing—peace and good will in the neighbourhood. He then proposed the first sentiment on his list—"The Queen, and may she long continue to reign over us."

The Chairman next gave "The Lord-Lieutenant, and Prosperity to Ireland," and called on the Rev. John Porter to respond.

Mr. Porter, in responding, said he could not class himself among the idolators of this toast. He was a common man, and could not be an idolator of any man living. Without any dereliction of duty, he could respond to the sentiment, but to no person would he bow in these realms save Queen Victoria, Lord Carlisle's gracious monarch. She was the only person in the whole universe before whom he would bow the knee. Lord Carlisle he looked upon as a man distinguished by a high and cultivated intellect, by a virtuous principle, and by a high sense of his duty, and the symbol and representative of loyalty, and he considered him a man more distinguished by the high qualities which should adorn his rank and office than he was by the office itself. As a minister of the Antrim Presbytery,—as one of yourselves,—I have to express my deep thanks to the high honour of Lord Carlisle, when the minister of this congregation was requested by a Minister of the Crown under him to sign his name as a member of a Presbytery with which he had no connexion; and when that document was sent by your minister to Lord Carlisle, repudiating the thing with scorn, Lord Carlisle wrote back a letter, almost apologising, and had justice done to Mr. Hall.

The Chairman next gave "Our liberal friends in the Remonstrant Synod."

Rev. Thomas Smyth, Raloo, replied—I rise with pleasure to thank you on behalf of my friends of the Remonstrant Synod, and I do so the more because I am disposed to regard the proposing of this sentiment in this place as a favourable omen of a thorough and lasting cordiality, at no distant date, between the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster and the Presbytery of Antrim, the constant and unfaltering staunch defenders of liberal Christianity. However we may argue about questions, I believe it to be a fact that the great principle contended for by the Presbytery of Antrim, the Sacred Scriptures and the right of private judgment, is the principle that is dearest to the great majority of the Remonstrant Church, both ministers and people. I believe, when the matter has become fully examined, all will cordially acknowledge the importance of this principle, and its acknowledgment will lay the foundation of a complete and lasting union. I own that I do not regard the present position of our Church as altogether satisfactory. It is true

we have stayed controversy for a little by our receding from the questions we had proposed to be put to ministers at ordination, but I fear we cannot trust that thereby future divisions will be completely prevented. Whenever a congregation becomes vacant, in the settlement of the new minister it is to be apprehended that the old feud of question or no question will manifest itself, and thus the old difficulty will arise. Better, in my opinion, to settle this matter before the evil day approaches, by adopting the true doctrine of Non-Subscription, as held by the Presbytery of Antrim. What is the position of our Non-Subscribing body at present? It is very awkward indeed. We of the Remonstrant Synod, the Northern Presbytery, and the Presbytery of Antrim, all look upon ourselves as Non-Subscribers. We have three kinds of Non-Subscription. The Presbytery of Antrim has the old principle of the Sacred Scriptures, and the right of private judgment. The Northern Presbytery of Antrim has this principle, and Mr. M'Alester's resolution in addition. The Remonstrant Synod has the Sacred Scriptures, the right of private judgment, and an addition—that is, the power to put the whole Confession of Faith, if it seems good to them. Now this, it must be acknowledged, is the position of our Church: we cannot continue in it; we cannot have these three kinds of non-subscription. The sooner we all adopt the great charter of Protestantism the better for our Church—the better for all parties.

The CHAIRMAN next gave "The Presbytery of Antrim."

Rev. JOHN PORTER responded. He was Clerk of the Presbytery of Antrim, and, therefore, he should say something. When that Presbytery had been formed, great controversies with regard to religion were going on. There were at that time in the Presbytery very distinguished men—men of learning, who had read the history of the Church, and knew and deplored the dissensions of the Church. They had found that there was no end to difference of opinion, and they therefore had resolved that every man should hold his own opinion. They had said that they, as ministers, after knowing that a man was educated, &c., would only ask, "Do you consider the Scriptures as the only rule and guide of faith?" They did not, he wished them to observe, hinder the congregation from asking any question. Therefore, the Presbytery of Antrim was not, as supposed, a Unitarian Presbytery, or a Calvinistic Presbytery. He could change his opinions any day on sufficient evidence, but would, of course, tell his congregation that; and if his opinions did not agree with those of the congregation, he would leave, although there was no legal power to compel him to do so. The Presbytery was a Christian community, and they had been happy till a short time ago. Calvinists used to preach in their meeting-houses. Dr. Hanna and Dr. Cooke had occupied his pulpit. He had married persons in Dr. Cooke's church, and Dr. Cooke would be welcome to his pulpit any day. He denied that he differed from Dr. Cooke. He denied that he was a Calvinist, but he was one with Dr. Cooke and Dr. Morgan, as a Christian. He was no sectarian. He held his own opinions, but he was one with the Calvinistic Church, he was one with the Church of England—more than that, he was one with the Roman Catholic Church, as a Christian. He scorned, he despised, he detested, he utterly abomi-

nated, that principle which would cut him off from the body of the Christian people. He was a Christian, and whenever he looked abroad on this Christian land, and could find a man who could stand before him and say he was a Christian, no matter in what religion he worshipped, that man he would honour: that man believed with him in God and God's Word. He believed with him in a future world, and they both cherished the truth with which God made them free. In the late struggle, the Presbytery of Antrim had been victorious, and, unless they had been, the religious liberty of the Presbyterian Church would have been gone. Some would say that they had only succeeded in separating the Ballyclare Congregation, but he would quote the judgment of the Master of the Rolls, who had said that the Presbytery of Antrim had not swerved one iota from its original principles. They had not only benefited the Ballyclare Congregation but the whole clergy of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland—as all of the ministers of that body with whom he had spoken confessed. They had procured for them a statement of the law as to the constitution of their Church, and the relation of a minister to his congregation and Presbytery. They had broken the bow and the spear of the oppressor. They had given liberty to the captive; they had set the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster free. They had scattered to the winds their miserable homœopathic creed.

The Chairman then proposed "Our liberal English brethren."

Rev. Wm. Smyth (Carrickfergus) responded. He, for one, felt most deeply indebted to his English brethren. They had been always the friends of religious liberty. They had felt that man's heart was formed for good, and that it was not necessary that he should be bound by any creed. They did not attempt to bind any man's heart or belief. It was painful to him to hear heresy named in the land, but that only proved that those who had "heresy" in their mouth were heretics themselves. He thought it was impossible for any one not to believe in Christ. Christ's life was just a revelation of God to man. God had prepared man's heart to feel that life without miracles. If miracles were required, he would not believe on it. It but required to be known to be believed. He had the greatest pleasure in responding to the sentiment of their liberal English brethren, as they had always sought to make liberty universal.

The Chairman next gave "The clergy and laity who have aided us in our recent struggle."

The Rev. John Porter responded, and, in the course of his speech, said that the laity of the Church had stuck to the side of freedom in a manner which deserved all praise. He then referred to an article headed "The Ballyclare Case," published in *The Christian Unitarian* for July, 1863. It said—"An unworthy effort has been made to represent the dissatisfied party as inconsiderable, and we have been informed that a private letter was written to an influential minister in England, stating that of the 83 names attached to the resolution of February 2, 1862, withdrawing from the Presbytery of Antrim, 56 were fraudulently added. We have the best reason to believe that all those signatures were *bonâ fide*, and we greatly regret that it is not in our power to expose the

party who was guilty of so gross misrepresentation." He (Mr. Porter) was the person referred to as having written the letter to the influential minister in England, and he begged to say that the allegations contained in this article of *The Christian Unitarian* were purely false and had no foundation. On this subject he had received the following letter from the Rev. Mr. Martineau:—

"Ty Mawr, Penmaenmawr, Conway,
July 5, 1863.

"My dear Sir,—If the letter to which *The Christian Unitarian* refers is still in existence (which I doubt), it is beyond my reach till I return to town at the end of September. I can, therefore, only report its statement about the Ballyclare list from memory. My impression is pretty distinct that your correction of the numbers on the voting-list was given in a postcript, and was added to the letter after you had seen the legal adviser of your Presbytery, and on his authority, not as a matter of immediate personal knowledge. The statement was not exactly that the fifty-six names were 'fraudulently added,' but that they had no right to be there. So at least, agreeably to my recollection, I have represented it if ever, as is not improbable, I have referred to the discrepancy between the allegations of the memorial to the Lord Lieutenant and those of your legal case. The discrepancy struck me forcibly as illustrating the difficulty of forming a well-grounded judgment at a distance, and I may very likely have cited it in this sense in conversation with friends.—I remain, my dear Sir, very faithfully yours, "James Martineau.

"Rev. John Porter."

After a few more remarks Mr. Porter concluded amid applause.

The other toasts given were "The *Northern Whig* and Liberal Press;" "Unity amid diversity," Rev. W. O. Magowan; "United Education," Rev. H. Moore; "Progress of free thought in our own and other Churches at the present time," Rev. Wm. Hall; "Our friends of other denominations who have honoured us with their presence;" "The Ladies;" &c.

A choir was in attendance, and, accompanied by a harmonium, sang several anthems during the evening.

INSTALLATION AT BALLYCLARE.

On Thursday, March 24, the Northern Presbytery of Antrim met at Ballyclare, to instal the Rev. Joseph M'Fadden as pastor of the New Congregation in that town. At twelve o'clock the place of meeting was filled with a numerous and most respectable congregation, and the Rev. James M'Ferran introduced the services, and preached a very eloquent and practical sermon, taking for his text Matt. vii. 21. The Rev. William Bruce followed. Addressing the congregation and the minister elect, he said—In discharging the duty that I have undertaken on this occasion, I mean to take for granted the universal admission of the observance of the Lord's Day for the purposes of public worship, and the appointment of pastors and teachers for the preaching of the Word, the administration of the ordinances, and other purposes of the Christian ministry. There have arisen many interesting questions connected with these

subjects on which I do not mean to touch. Neither do I mean to enlarge upon the peculiarities of the Presbyterian Church as distinguished from others. There is, I think, such a general recognition of each other's rights and privileges on these points, as to render such discussion unnecessary. But there have been, at different times, calumnious misrepresentations put forward that make it right, and indeed necessary, for me to re-affirm, distinctly and emphatically, the adherence of this Presbytery to the fundamental principles that occasioned the separation of the Presbytery of Antrim from the General Synod of Ulster, and which we have faithfully observed. I think it *right*, because appropriate to the occasion; I think it *necessary*, because the frequent reiteration of what is false will sometimes make it pass for true if it be not contradicted. It is not that we adhere to the principles because they were dictated by those eminent servants of Christ, that bore their testimony so nobly to the liberty that we ought to have as disciples of Jesus Christ; for this would be only to transfer our allegiance from the Westminster Divines to another human authority. We adhere to them because we believe them to be most important principles, lying at the foundation of our Christian liberty. We believe, with our predecessors (and I at least may say our forefathers), that "no Church or set of uninspired men, whether met in synods, councils, or any other society, have any power from Christ to add any other terms of religious communion to those which he hath settled in the Gospel:" and we maintain that this implies that we *are* to receive those terms which he *hath* settled in the Gospel. In the full meaning and spirit of their words we heartily concur, and we emphatically deny that we have ever departed from them, or that we wish you, either now or at any other time, to do so. We consider it a false and, indeed, absurd assertion, to maintain that bowing to Christ as the authority for your ministry, and taking his words, as recorded by the Evangelists or explained by the Apostles, who are the authorized expositors of his will, and our guides to Gospel truth, is to take the authority of any creed, confession, articles, or ecclesiastical canons. We adhere to the words of Paul, that "if any consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ," we are to withdraw ourselves from such; and we cannot know this consent except by avowal and profession. We conceive that it is right and proper, on this solemn occasion, both for *your* satisfaction (the Congregation on the one hand, and the minister on the other) who are entering into this relation with all its obligations, and for *our* satisfaction, in faithfully fulfilling the trust reposed in us, concurring in this settlement, and accepting you as our co-presbyter, to revert to the grand fundamental truth of the Gospel, and to bear our testimony that we acknowledge one God even the Father, and one Lord even Jesus Christ his Son. We cannot go through this service, and efface from it what constitutes the essential difference between the Gospel of Christ and the Koran of Mahomet, or the secularism or pantheism of the present day. If I have made my meaning clear, you will see what we consider to be the essential difference between subscribing a creed, which is to bow to the authority of man, and making open profession of our faith in Christ, which rests not on the word of man, but on the

authority of Christ himself. "Be ye followers of me," saith St. Paul, "even as I am of Christ." And now, my brother, if Paul, with his vast superiority over us, thought it right, in the commencement of every epistle that he wrote, whether to churches or individuals, to renew his avowal of his faith in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, to derive the authority of his Apostleship from Jesus Christ, and to consider God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ the joint source of grace, mercy, and peace, you will not think it unbecoming in you, in this important phase of your ministerial life, to imitate his example, and now declare your matured conviction of those important truths which you have so often taught in your former ministrations.

Mr. Bruce then called on Mr. M'Fadden to give a statement of his religious views, which he did most fully and explicitly. He next asked the Congregation whether they adhered to the call, and Mr. M'Fadden whether he adhered to his acceptance of it. Both having answered in the affirmative, he asked the members of Presbytery whether they were satisfied and willing to accept Mr. M'Fadden as a co-presbyter: and they having signified that they were, he offered up the installation prayer; and afterwards invited the ministers present, both those of the Northern Presbytery and others, to join him in giving the right hand of fellowship to the newly-appointed minister.

The Rev. J. Scott Porter delivered an impressive charge to the minister and people, and concluded with praise and prayer.

The Presbytery and the other ministers were entertained at dinner; about fifty persons, members of the Congregation and friends, were present.

In the evening a soiree, to inaugurate the settlement of Mr. M'Fadden, was held in Mr. Bell's factory, being the largest room available for the purpose. It was crowded to inconvenience, between 300 and 400 ladies and gentlemen being present. Among them were—Revds. Wm. Bruce, J. S. Porter, C. J. M'Alester, C. Porter, J. M'Ferran, J. M'Fadden, W. Crozier, J. Callwell, M. Getty, J. A. Crozier, and R. Cleland; A. M. Porter, Esq., Barrister-at-Law; T. B. Johnson, Esq.; W. Spackman, Esq.; J. M'Fadden, Esq., &c. &c. The room was tastefully ornamented with evergreens and well-executed mottoes, and a large portrait of the Rev. Dr. Montgomery was conspicuously placed at the head of the room. After tea, John J. Kirkpatrick, Esq., was moved to the chair. He briefly explained the object of the meeting, and gave in succession the usual loyal sentiments. The Rev. J. A. Crozier responded to "The Lord Lieutenant and Prosperity to Ireland." He dwelt on the public character of Lord Carlisle, who had won the respect of every right-thinking man in the community. With regard to "Prosperity to Ireland," he referred to several reformations that were needed, and to the emigration that was going on, and concluded amid applause.

The CHAIRMAN then gave "Civil and Religious Liberty," and called upon the Rev. J. S. Porter to respond.

Mr. PORTER said that the sentiment had been received as he expected in that assemblage of liberal and enlightened persons. "Civil and religious liberty" was considered as one of the charter

toasts at social meetings in connexion with their body. In their mouths it was no mere truism. It was a sentiment that had a place in their hearts and affections, and one which he trusted they would long retain. They loved civil and religious liberty. They advocated liberty for all; and, minister of Christ though he was, he would stand up for the liberty of those who rejected the Christian religion, if their rights were invaded, and would be as ready to advocate their claims to an undoubted right as he would be to advocate the claims of his own people. These general opinions led him to refer to a matter which had occupied much of their attention of late. He argued for liberty for the people as well as for the minister; liberty not merely for the Presbytery but for the congregations. He could not understand how persons with the holy words of "civil and religious liberty" upon their lips should dare to trample under foot the rights of a Christian congregation. He held it was the right of a Christian congregation not merely to select the minister of their choice, but to select, also, that religious connexion with which they should be associated; and when any persons ventured to drag a congregation, acting by a majority of qualified members—as, he was sorry to say, had been the case in Ballyclare—into a court of law, and compel them, so far as the dictates of a court of law could influence them, either to remain in connexion with a Presbytery in whose character they had no confidence—or else forfeit their congregational property—much of it having been contributed by themselves, and almost the whole of the rest contributed by their pious ancestors—he could not understand how they could pronounce without a blush the sacred words of "civil and religious liberty." I cannot help regretting that some of those with whom, in early life, it was my happiness to be associated—my Dissenting brethren on the other side of the channel—among whom I was a minister for the first seven years of my occupation of the pastoral office, have, I think through erroneous representations, been led to take a very mistaken view of this question. I am satisfied that if the question had been fairly put before them—if they had been told "On the one side are the minister and a few who adhere to him, and upon the other is the vast majority of the congregation, including the whole of the session and all the members of the committee but one"—and if they had been told that the minister, with the concurrence of the few who adhered to him and to the Presbytery of Antrim, had, by means of a court of law, ejected the majority of the people from their meeting-house, their session-house, and their manse, and sent them out to seek a shelter wherever they could find one to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience—I imagine, that though some of them might be partial to the opinions which, rightly or wrongly, are imputed to that minister and those attached to his ministry, they never would have given their sanction to such proceedings, and would never have given their money for the purpose of ousting you out of your ancestral rights. It had even been stated that in the published list, authenticated by Mr. Bruce and himself, 56 out of 83 names were the names of persons who had no right or claim to be regarded as constituents of the Old Congregation of Ballyclare. He hoped that means would be taken to enlighten deceived parties

on this point; and he trusted that even some of those who may have given money for the purpose of carrying on the litigation against those he was addressing, would be happy to assist them ere long in getting rid of some of the expenses connected with the litigation, when they were made aware of what the real merits of the question were. The Rev. Gentleman concluded by apologising for the absence of Dr. Montgomery. Though much had lately been said and done for the purpose of depreciating the character and underrating the services of that great and illustrious man—it would all fail, for he was far beyond such influences. He had seen the Rev. Doctor on the previous day, and he had stated he could not come to that meeting without contravening the directions of his medical adviser, and causing great anxiety to his family, who thought it would be injurious to his health. Under these circumstances he had begged him to convey his assurance of his deep sympathy with them in their past trials, and his determination to aid and countenance them to the utmost of his power in those difficulties which still beset their course.

The CHAIRMAN then proposed "The Rev. Joseph M'Fadden and the Northern Presbyterian Congregation of Ballyclare; may the connexion this day formed tend to the spread of Gospel truth, and the promotion of practical religion in our neighbourhood."

The Rev. JOSEPH M'FADDEN, on rising to respond, was received with applause. He thanked them most sincerely for the reception they had given him on that occasion. He knew from past experience, that the people of Ballyclare, were very willing to appreciate conduct which was faithfully discharged. He hoped most sincerely that they would feel that the words which he spoke, whether respecting doctrine or respecting duty, came from the sincerity of his soul; and, though it might be that some of them would not agree with him in minor points of doctrine, he still trusted they would believe him to be an honest man. He would extend the right hand of fellowship to members of other churches, but he did not profess to sink his own views in order to obtain their good opinion or warm approval. Until he was convinced his own views were wrong, he would endeavour to maintain them, and he should always consider it as an act of the basest meanness to conceal those views in order to obtain the friendship of any man in the world. His motto was—charity to all, but, at the same time, maintenance of the truth as it is in Jesus. After some further remarks, Mr. M'Fadden said he regretted parting from the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster, and he would still feel himself to be one of them; but, though he was parting from them, he did not wish them to think that he entered the Northern Presbytery with any unwillingness. He appreciated the talents and Christian liberty maintained by that body; and, however humble a member he might be, he entered it with the fullest conviction that he should be received with friendship and be treated as kindly as he had been by his friends of the Remonstrant Synod.

The CHAIRMAN then gave "The Officiating Ministers of the Day."

The Rev. JAMES M'FERRAN responded. He might say, without presumption, that the members of the Northern Presbytery of Antrim could trace a long line of spiritual ancestors, distinguished

for their talent, learning, love of religious liberty, and, above all, their uncompromising fidelity to the Bible, as the only safeguard against secularism, rationalistic tendencies, fanatical delusion, and the doctrines of a false theology. He had much pleasure in being present on that occasion. He admired the manly front that the congregation had shown against the difficulties that had beset them. He hoped that the connexion which had been that day formed would be beneficial to all.

The CHAIRMAN next gave "The Northern Presbytery of Antrim —thanks for its maintenance of those free Christian principles which distinguished the ancient Presbytery of Antrim."

The Rev. WILLIAM BRUCE, in responding to the sentiment, said it must be a great puzzle to some of their friends to read the proceedings that took place in Ballyclare a few weeks ago. They were told that those who remained in the old congregation were freed from a tyranny, and that, unless they had separated and kept themselves distinct from the others, their liberties "were not worth a month's purchase." They were also told that "the spear and bow of the oppressor" had been broken for them, and that they had been released from captivity. Of course the bow and spear were not broken with regard to his friends before him, and they were still captives. It seemed very extraordinary that they should rejoice in their captivity, and that they should feel themselves in such cheerful and pleasant circumstances. The liberty that they were deprived of was very remarkable. It was surely a great piece of tyranny on the part of the Presbytery to require that the person who is to teach the truths of the Gospel should be expected to be willing to avow his own belief in those truths—that the person who was to baptize their children should believe in the only authority under which that rite could be administered—that he was to administer the Lord's Supper as commemorative of the death and resurrection of our Lord, without the congregation knowing whether or not he was among those who considered all this to be a myth, which was *alias* for a fable. That was the liberty they had not wished to enjoy, and he was sure they would never wish to enjoy. He could not exhort them to imitate the liberality of the Presbytery of Antrim, when he found that, in the last number of the periodical edited by their Clerk, there was a proposal for what he would call a *litigation* committee to be established, with hardly the concealed pupose of litigating our rights and properties. This litigation committee was proposed, accompanied with what he would call a *pious fraud*. There were persons named on that committee who had never heard of the thing, and those with whom he had spoken laughed at the idea as an absurdity. There were other matters, and other still stronger proofs of the liberality of those parties which he hoped his friends here would not imitate; but he hoped they would attend to the good advice of Mr. Porter, and endeavour to follow up that sentiment which was placed before him—"Follow peace with all men." He had to congratulate them upon the unanimous appointment of Mr. M'Fadden to be their minister, and he had to congratulate them further upon, he might say, the wonderful unanimity, and cheerfulness, and spirit with which they had conducted their affairs from the time they had

separated from the old congregation. He believed it was unique, and there could not be an example found of so many persons heartily joining in accomplishing the same great purpose, and he hoped it would meet with all the success that it deserved. He begged to congratulate the new congregation, and also his friend Mr. M'Fadden on his connexion with them. Mr. M'Fadden was connected by marriage with their old minister, Mr. Futt Marshall, who was there when he (Mr. Bruce) first began his ministry; and he could not have a better wish than that he should, with the late Mr. Marshall, equally enjoy the love of his people.

The other sentiments given were "The Remonstrant Synod of Ulster—may it never abandon the foundation of Divine Truth on which it was established," responded to by the Moderator, the Rev. J. Callwell, who ably vindicated its Christian principles; "Non-Sectarian Education—the greatest blessing to a divided country," replied to by Mr. A. M. Porter in an eloquent speech; "Our Pious Ancesters," Rev. C. Porter; "*The Christian Unitarian*;" "The Sunday-School—the nursery of the Church;" "Our friends of other denominations—amid diversities of opinion, may there be unity of spirit;" "The Chairman;" &c. &c.

OBITUARY.

Died, on February 26th, James, second son of George Lindsay, Moorlands, Banbridge, aged 18 years.

Died, on February 28th, at the residence of her son, Clermont, Holywood, Elizabeth, daughter of the late Thomas Boyle, Esq., of Drumcovit, County Derry, and relict of the late Rev. James Alex. Johnson, of Holywood.

Died, on March 3rd, at her residence, 38, College Street, Belfast, Miss Jane Maxwell, aged 78 years.

Died, on March 4th, at his residence, Drumgiven, aged 52, Mr. John Moore, a worthy and respected Elder of the 1st Presbyterian (Remonstrant) Congregation of Kilmore.

Died, on March 9th, at St. Albin's House, Edgbaston, Mary, daughter of John Kettle, Esq., of Birmingham, and widow of the late Rev. John Kentish, fifty years minister of the New Meeting Congregation in that town, in the 89th year of her age.

Died, on March 12th, Samuel, eldest child of Mr. James Gregg, Ballyclare, in the fifth year of his age.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A communication from Rev. J. Cooper, and various other articles, held over for want of space.

Communications for the Editor, to be addressed by post to Rev. C. J. M'Alester, Holywood; or, otherwise, to 45, Arthur Street Belfast.

THE

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NATURAL AND REVEALED RELIGION.

THE phrase "Natural and Revealed Religion" has been long employed to designate two distinct sources of religious knowledge. Superstitious Christians sometimes entertain the belief that God can only be known through the Scriptures; but, in holding such an opinion, they overlook the very foundation of all religion—the knowledge of God's existence—which may be derived from the study of nature. Revelation, it has been justly remarked, assumes the being of God as the basis of religion, and this foundation principle is deeply laid in nature. Thus the Psalmist, with no less truth than beauty, sings—"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth forth his handiwork." And in a similar spirit Paul writes—"The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead;" and the same Apostle, with equal truth, declares—"He left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." And a greater than David or Paul points the multitudes whom he instructed to "the lilies of the field" and "the fowls of the air." The earnest and devout contemplation of nature may enable the human mind to reach to a knowledge of God's oneness and greatness, while it may also help in forming an idea, however limited and vague, of his goodness: and the study of the human soul may farther aid in attaining some knowledge of the perfections of God. To the careful and patient study of God in his works and his providence, some of the most devout and gifted Christians have applied their minds, and thus built

up in their own souls and the souls of others, a firmer faith in him in whom "we live and move and have our being." Of this class of students, it may be enough for our purpose to mention the names—household words in our Unitarian calendar—of Newton and Locke. But while there is so much in nature to invite the devout inquirer, and largely reward his investigations, we have been accustomed gratefully and reverently to turn to another source of religious knowledge—the revelation which is contained in the Holy Scriptures. Respecting the extent of the revelation which the Scriptures embody, there is a great and an increasing diversity of opinion among those who equally believe in this distinct and independent source of religious knowledge. The theories of verbal and plenary inspiration, held by the unthinking in various churches, seem to our mind utterly untenable; and the party in the Church of England, who have recently put forth such a view, in order to oppose a rationalistic tendency among their brethren, have, by their declaration, done much to injure the cause which they desired to help. On the nature and extent of inspiration there has been much difference of opinion among sincere believers in revelation; but a variety of views on such subjects is perfectly compatible with a devout faith in God's Word, contained in the Holy Volume: and any creeds or theories enjoined by Churches to restrict free inquiry on these matters, appear to be an unjust and unauthorized infringement of Christian liberty. But if we hold that all religion is natural, and that, apart from the teachings of nature, there is no source of instruction, we necessarily abandon revelation, and reject the authority which in Christian Churches is placed in the writings of the Old and New Testament. Such is the theory of Parker and Renan in our own day, and such was the doctrine of Voltaire, Paine, and other able writers in the past century. It may be objected that the tone in which the latest deistical writers speak of Jesus is, in general, reverent and respectful. We admit that it is; but they regard him as possessing no other sources of knowledge than those which are natural, and open to all human beings; and thus they discard *revealed* as, in any just sense, distinguishable from *natural* religion.

Christianity, from whatever point we regard it, necessarily implies *revelation*. *Christ* signifies one specially appointed by God. The records which we possess of the religion that Jesus introduced, exhibit him as divinely sent. His own words, as recorded by the evangelists, distinctly assert his heavenly mission; and his miracles are represented as attesting it. Those who wrote his life thus present him everywhere to our view; and the apostles, whom he commissioned to spread his Gospel, proclaimed his divine mission, declared, amid the bitter sneers and cruel persecutions of the unbelieving, his supernatural resurrection from the dead, and willingly laid down their lives rather than abandon their faith in these glorious truths. All the earlier records of Christianity present it in the same light; and never, till a very recent period, were there, so far as we know, any who held that a denial of revealed religion was compatible with the position of a minister in the Christian Church. The view in which the Scriptures have been regarded in every Church implies a faith in revealed, as distinguishable from natural religion. The Church of Rome has in many ways supplemented those Scriptures; so to a less extent have the Churches of England and Scotland; but our own and other Non-Conforming Churches, in rejecting such additions as have been, from time to time, made to the Holy Volume, have yet retained that volume, and invested it with supreme authority. Why so? We refuse to receive our religious faith on human authority, whether that be conveyed in the Confessions and Articles that other denominations have endorsed,—whether it be contained in the Judgment of an Irish Master of the Rolls, or the decision of an English Privy Council; but we cheerfully give our allegiance to the Scriptures, not as in all things being, but as containing, a rule of faith and duty: and in thus raising them above ordinary books, however wise and good their authors, and above the articles of religion drawn up by human Councils and Assemblies, we seem distinctly enough to signify their peculiar character as embodying a *revealed* religion. In the Christian revelation much is taught which seems also to be inculcated by the outward creation and the dictates of the human mind. Such are the unity of God, his power,

wisdom, and goodness. But beyond such views as with much study may thus be deduced from nature, there are the Fatherhood of God, the efficacy of repentance, the future life of retribution, and the other holy and precious truths which are embodied in the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of our blessed Lord.

It is surely neither unreasonable nor illiberal to maintain that, as a fundamental principle in every Christian Church, there should be a distinct recognition of revealed religion. We can imagine a Church whose only bond of union is Free Inquiry, or whose only basis is natural religion; but we cannot understand the constitution of a *Christian* Church which does not require, on the part of all intrants into its ministry, an explicit avowal of faith in the divinely-appointed Saviour. Neither can we understand any one accepting the Scriptures as a rule of faith, and not admitting the miraculous in Christ's character. Yet such there have been—men who read the Sacred Volume, and preach from it in the pulpit, and employ it as a symbol of their religion; and nevertheless reject everything beyond natural religion which it contains. And because we condemn such glaring inconsistency, and argue for the necessity of basing a Christian Church on the confession of the Saviour's divine mission, we are denounced as bigots and intolerants, as creed-makers and persecutors.

The great question which, below the surface, is at present agitating more Churches than our own, is—Shall we abandon any distinct acknowledgment of *revealed* religion, and rest only on such knowledge as we may gather from natural sources? To some it may appear that the pulpit, even were the principles of the Church thus modified and, as we believe, terribly lowered, might still be a great means of educating, reforming, comforting, and blessing society. Perhaps for a time it might. Not at once do the effects of Christian training and thinking pass away. The hopes and the consolations which men have drawn from the Gospel may linger in their hearts long after they have abandoned all faith in that Gospel's doctrines and promises. When the sun has sunk in the horizon, its influence still spreads over the earth: hill and dale and sea repose in a clear though subdued light; but by and bye that

light becomes more and more faint, and soon the whole scene is wrapped in gloom. For a time, even when faith in the Gospel has been given up, its influence will prevail: but gradually, in a Church which ignores the Sun of Righteousness,—which does not place it distinctly in its organization, as God has set it in the spiritual firmament,—the people must soon find themselves in "the darkness and the shadow of death."

A CONFESSOR OF THE PRESENT CENTURY.

PART II.

THE following entry in Mr. Armstrong's journal records his inauguration into the life and duties of the Unitarian ministry:—

"SUNDAY, FEB. 4, 1838.—Commenced this day in devout self-surrender to my Heavenly Father, my accepted and formal ministration, as co-pastor with the Rev. Dr. Lant Carpenter, in the charge of Lewin's-Mead Congregation of Bristol. A very numerous congregation, and abundantly kind expressions of welcome, &c., after the service."

His *ministerial* life thenceforward may be said to have flowed on in a comparatively even and uninterrupted course of nearly twenty years, till its close. He remained with the Congregation of Bristol; and devoting his rare powers of mind, and the zeal and faithfulness by which he was eminently characterized, to the calling which he had maturely adopted, it need scarcely be said that he soon became known, not only as an able Christian advocate, but also as one of the most public-spirited, patriotic, and liberal of the citizens of Bristol. "There he formed new ties as a husband and a father, and his sick pillow—for he suffered much from asthma—was soothed, and his life again cheered, by the affection of amiable children and the indefatigable devotion of an admirable wife."

A striking peculiarity in the character of Mr. Armstrong, and abundantly exemplified in his career, was the happy combination of moral courage and perseverance which he possessed; which, founded on, and sustained and inspired by, his unlimited faith in Unitarian Christianity, as the revealed truth of the Gospel, and in the

great principles of civil and religious liberty as the inalienable birthright of mankind, enabled him not only to preserve his integrity even unto the end, but to do high credit to his Master's cause by his unflinching and steady zeal in his service. Nor did he confine himself merely to the pastoral duties of a Unitarian minister, although the increasing prosperity and influence of his Congregation, and the extended and useful operations of the several charitable and educational institutions in connexion with it, bore testimony to the distinguished faithfulness and ability with which these were discharged. But his views of duty took a much wider range; for, while he cherished no vain ambition to be distinguished by the *name*, nature had laid upon him the necessity to pursue the *work* of a moral and religious, and also a political, *reformer*. He recognized no barriers of race, or clime, or creed, as limitations agains the outgoing of his sympathies towards his brethren of mankind. Wherever he saw tyrannical usurpation, or unprincipled abuse of power, oppression or misrule,—wherever he saw the cloven foot of bigotry or intolerance,—whether at home or abroad, his honest indignation found immediate vent in unsparing denunciations, both public and private. Wherever he saw men suffering under oppression, injustice, or ignorance, his heartfelt sympathies leapt forth towards them, and they ever found in him a zealous worker towards their relief. Wherever he saw great popular movements in favour of liberty and progress,—the rising of nations long downtrodden to break off their fetters and be free,—he seemed to rejoice with a joy as hearty as if in every such event he felt a great personal blessing accruing to himself. In very deed he seems to have adopted as his motto the grand old words of the Roman Poet—"*Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto.*" His letters to many persons high in authority, civil and ecclesiastical, urging the reform of prominent abuses in Church and State, or claiming redress of some public wrong, evince a noble fearlessness, a calm confidence in the power of rectitude, and, at the same time, a dignified respect; while they present, for the most part, models of powerful reasoning, and superior style in epistolary writing. We would particularise his numerous letters on the subject of the un-

just and faithless *sectarianizing* of the British and Foreign School Society, and the practical exclusion of Unitarians from its benefits and co-operation—a subject that occupied much of his time and thoughts during the latter years of his life. His letters on this important subject to Earl Ducie, Lord John Russell, T. B. Macaulay, Thomas Clarkson, and the Duke of Argyle, are highly interesting to Unitarians, and should be so to all friends of liberal education.

But after all, the great subject with which Mr. Armstrong's name and efforts as a public man were most distinctively and honourably connected was the abolition of negro slavery in America. A few years ago this question was strangely unpopular amongst many inhabitants of these free and happy lands, and its advocates were freely condemned as mischievous demagogues, or pitied as amiable enthusiasts; but the stern "logic of events" has effected a significant change in this regard, and that which was looked upon as visionary or revolutionary, or, at best, as wildly impossible, we may one day, and that at no distant date, awake to behold *un fait accompli!*

Mr. Armstrong, however, waited for no such change either of opinions or events. Enough for him that *slavery* was a wrong—a mighty wrong; and if not "the sum of all human villanies," one of the greatest crimes against liberty and right—against man and God—with which ever the earth was cursed. He threw himself heart and soul into the crusade against this monster evil. He sought the correspondence, and obtained the intimacy and trust, of such American advocates of abolition as Garrison, May, and many others. With Dr. Channing, his familiar friend, his thoughts and labours on this great question were in entire agreement; while in England he was known as the companion and fellow-labourer of Estlin and Brougham in the anti-slavery cause. Lord Brougham, alluding to him after his death, writes of him as "that noble-hearted and excellent man."

We shall now adduce some extracts from the writings of Mr. Armstrong, which, as illustrative of the views upon another subject of this eminent Unitarian confessor and apostle of universal liberty, may not be uninteresting

to readers both of our own and other Churches at the present time.

In 1846, referring to the Ronge and other similar movements, he thus writes to the Rev. S. May of Massachussets :—

"Are not 'all these things for us?' I confess they carry with them an unspeakable interest to my mind. I cannot discard Christianity, and I cannot embrace an incredible and revolting form of it. Retaining my belief of Christ's resurrection, and of the many wonderful works done by him as proof of his direct commission from the Father, I rejoice in such developments of the mind of our age as seem to ensure the preservation of these simple but sublime convictions, disentangled from the horrid and preposterous conceptions of the divine nature and dispensations which have for such lengthened time made Christianity a dead letter, or a living joke, to such multitudes of its nominal professors, leaving us the wretched alternative only of an intolerant fanaticism or a chilling worldlyism. Therefore it is that a free but believing theology has such supreme value and interest in my eyes. I wish no constraint, no penalties, no personal estrangements; but rather, nay quite, the opposite. Only I want full scope for impressing such views of Christianity as shall enable men to worship together God as a Father, who has spoken to them by his Son, and spoken in such a way as He has never spoken by any other, the most privileged or gifted, of his creatures.

"Now Theodore Parker does not do this; and I have fearful apprehensions (1846!) that some distinguished men among ourselves will either travel in *the same mystical and visionary path themselves, or influence many of those who are to succeed them so to do.* You will see by my Taunton sermon that I am endeavouring to oppose myself to this tendency; but also, that I aim to do so in no unkind, unloving, or presumptuous spirit. To be free, and yet be *intellectually* as well as morally Christian, (and without the former what guarantee have we?—I mean, without satisfactory grounds of belief, how can we be sure of belief at all?) such is the problem in the spiritual, as the harmony of the centripetal and centrifugal forces is in the physical world. How beautifully Channing and Henry Ware united them."

Again, from a letter of October 26, 1850 :—

"What a time it is for Unitarianism, if it knew how to profit by its opportunity; but alas! the religious, or irreligious stirring of men's minds in these latter days has visited our borders with no less strange manifestations, though of a different character, than we have witnessed elsewhere. An affected liberalism would throw down all barriers, and, *in the aim of embracing all, has ended in grasping nothing;* it resigns or derides its creed, and the seekers of the age are prone to understand that Unitarians have nothing to offer them, and go to other folds to knock for admission. Yet I

trust we have some true spirits among us who understand our position, our interests, and our duties," &c., &c.

"If I have bigotry at all on such a subject," he writes to the same friend in 1852, "and I suppose I have, I must confess to a hatred of the instinctive, transcendental, and *what-not* German School of moral and metaphysical philosophy—the spawn of Kant's misunderstood speculations—the dreams of the half-crazed Coleridge, and the inane fancy of the Hares, Sterlings, Whewels, in long and varied succession since."

In May, 1857 (the year of his death), to a very particular friend he writes as follows:—

"I applaud, and yet do not quite understand, your views as to Church loyalty among lay Unitarians. Loyalty to *what?* To some truth, surely, peculiar to that Church. Yet what is that truth? and on what does it rest? From whence is it? from heaven or from men? You do not say, and our living writers seem all at sea about it. I am sure, for instance, I do not know what *The Inquirer* would be at." [Hard for Mr. Armstrong, with only logic and love of truth for his guides, to understand *The Inquirer!*] "The *simplest* creed, if stated in words, affrights him. Yet *some* positive creed he seems to consider (justly, I think) indispensable to a Church, and of course to 'Church loyalty,' which is much the position of my friend Gordon, of Edinburgh, yet whose point of difference with Mr. J. J. Taylor I cannot very clearly make out.

"I am old and grey-headed now, yet have I never found any description of religious truth so tenable by the intellect and so suitable to the wants of the heart, as the *revelation* through Jesus of the watchful providence, the paternal character, and the righteous retributions of one God and Father of all, who is 'above all, and through all, and in all.'

"But I cannot be content without the distinctive foundation of these truths (simple though they be) in the specific and historic *corroboration* afforded them by the Gospel narratives. They are in themselves *theism* to be sure; but they are theism, or natural religion, supernaturally confirmed, which makes all the difference to me, or at least the *essential* difference, between the son of Sophroniscus and the son of Mary. No one that I know so fully and fervently states and understands this as Orville Dewey in some of his noble discourses. Paley does it, but more concisely and severely."

The last extract which we shall give from his writings is appropriately taken from his very beautiful letter to his congregation, on receipt of their affectionate address in reply to his announcement of the resignation of his pastoral charge, toward the end of the preceding year, from long-continued and increasing ill health.

"As a Christian minister, not to say as a sinning man, I felt

profoundly that I could have no strength, and least of all any peace *out of Christ*. . . . Forgive me, brethren, if especially I speak this as a truth on which none can too deeply reflect. The world wants more of communion with Christ. In our public life, in our home life, and chiefly and supremely of all, as including the rest, in our solitary heart, we need to know Christ as a power of God (not as a subject of speculation) more than we have yet known him. In the latter days of my life, and still on my sick bed, I place this truth before you with more solemnity than I could have ever done before; and I desire in this closing communication with you, dear and Christian friends, that you should feel I can neither seek for you nor for myself any higher blessing from our Heavenly Father, any more precious fruit of the mission of his Christ, as the wisdom of God, and the *power* of God unto salvation in the heart of every one that believes."

But, urge the objectors, are not these to be taken as the expressions rather of that conservative re-action natural to advancing age, than of his pristine love of liberty, so fearless and intense? No, we reply; Mr. Armstrong, like his friend Channing, was "always young for liberty" but it was "that liberty wherewith *Christ had made him free*"—that liberty for which he had freely encountered such trials and sacrifices, hard fought and dearly won, of which he so well knew the nature and the value—is it any wonder that of this liberty he was always conservative, defending it with his latest breath, and refusing to surrender its priceless treasures to that mad *licence* of the present day, which usurps the sacred name, and tramples on the still more sacred reality? Hear his biographer—

"In the controversies of the Unitarian Church on the subjects of philosophy and theology, he *always* took the conservative side. He had great reverence for Locke and Paley, and great faith in the historical evidences and supernatural guarantees of the divine origin of Christianity.

"It was a striking sight to see him writing at this time. He was generally in bed, propped up by pillows, with a piece of mill-board, which he used as a desk, supported on his bent knees. He was wasted almost to a skeleton, and his pale, drawn face would have scarcely appeared to belong to a living body but for the bright flash of his eyes, which told that there was an unconquered mind within. His pen moved rapidly over his paper, and he never seemed at a loss for matter. Some book-shelves were placed within his reach, on which were laid works of reference and a few volumes of his favourite authors, and by his side a little table, covered with newspapers, among which *The Anti Slavery Standard* was always conspicuous.

"He was occupied during many of his last days in defending these (the foregoing) views of theology and philosophy, which he thought were threatened with annihilation in the Unitarian Church by the tendency to the opposite school evinced by recent public appointments within her pale. He published two long letters, signed '*Pro Aris et Focis*'; and *on the last day of his life*, was busy with an essay on the same subject, of which he has left an unfinished manuscript."

Gently and peacefully his soul parted from its frail earthly tenement on the 6th of August, 1857; his last moments soothed by the presence and ministrations of his devoted wife and family.

Be the memory of the good, who leave us for the better land, so graven on the tablet of our hearts, that we may be led to emulate their excellence, that, like them, we may live in virtue and may die in peace!

C.

LEAD THOU ME ON.

SEND kindly light amid th' encircling gloom,
And lead me on;
The night is dark, and I am far from home;
Lead Thou me on!
Keep Thou my feet: I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou
Should'st lead me on;
I loved to choose and see my path; but now
Lead Thou me on!
I loved day's dazzling light, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will: remember not past years!

So long thy power hath blessed me; surely still
'Twill lead me on
Through dreary doubt, through pain and sorrow, till
The night is gone,
And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which I have loved long since, and lost a while.

SPECULATORS.

Although I am far from what people of the present time would call *orthodox* in belief, I am very unwilling to follow, even in appearance, the *speculators*, shallow or profound, now so anxious to attract attention in the religious world. Growing older, my faith in Jesus as a Redeemer and Advocate is becoming firmer, whilst my faith in his critics is becoming feebler every day. Of late the babble of broad-school preachers has become perfectly stunning; but I am thankful that the voice of Christ, speaking "as never man spake," is becoming clearer and more attractive still. The evil heart of unbelief is now having one of its periodical *saturnalia*, but most of the speculators will soon be wearied with their own imaginings, and willing to listen once more to the voice of the Good Shepherd. They will be quickly taught, if by nothing else, yet by the stern discipline of life, that the farther they go away from Him, the more dreary and galling becomes the path they must tread to the grave. Very few indeed, if any, accept at last the conclusions to which their unhallowed speculations conduct them; and the sooner, therefore, they can arrive at the end of their mental wanderings the better, so that they may find out by experience, and while it is called to-day, the depth of their infatuation.

The German speculators have already, in most instances, run their career; and their conclusions in general are sufficiently shocking—so much so as to astound the Christian world, and even in some cases the dreamers themselves! *Blasche*, for instance, has arrived very learnedly at the conclusion, that as the human soul had a beginning and a development, it must necessarily also have an end, but his disciples are not likely to appreciate this curious consummation of their folly. *F. Richter* settles down in the conviction that the belief in a remedy of wrongs in the future life is the great hindrance to repentance and amendment in the present world, but in what way this conclusion can be established is not so easily explained. *Feuerbach* asserts that the belief in a true death which completely ends the life of the indivi-

dual, can alone render man capable of true religion and self-denial. *Schopenhauer* teaches that a belief in *individual* future existence is the error from which it should be the aim of life to extricate ourselves. But, as we happen to be created individuals, and as it is a law of nature that we can be rewarded or punished as individuals only, Schopenhauer's bubble must burst like those of other speculators, so soon, or perhaps sooner, than it can be fairly set afloat. The more notorious *Strauss* proclaims that the last enemy that shall be destroyed by criticism is the belief in a future individual existence. Is it not well that the results of all these, and many other tortuous speculations too numerous to mention, should thus come out clearly and quickly, so that sympathisers among ourselves may have a little time for reflection? May we not hope that the recoil from the dreary abyss, to the brink of which sceptical negation has pressed so many insensibly forward at the present day, will happily prove the first step, in most instances at least, to the recovery of that Christian truth which had been thoughtlessly lost, or ignominiously sold?

Much of the evil which now eclipses the serene light of faith has resulted from an unlicensed Biblical criticism, in which every neophyte fancies he is competent to indulge. Biblical criticism, when legitimately employed, has done good service to the cause of truth. In the hands of faithful, well-educated men, it has proved a noble implement, but when wielded by vain, or ignorant, or dishonest workmen, the results are truly deplorable. Its legitimate exercise has given us a *sure text*, by removing very many various readings—not less, it is said, than 30,000 in the Old Testament, and still greater numbers in the New,—but its licentious exercise threatens to sweep away the very record itself! We shall hold fast the precious record, however, let the critics criticise ever so profoundly. For it is, after all, of very small consequence whether the Pentateuch, for example, was all, or in part, written originally by Moses, or whether it contains evidences within itself of a remodelling hand later than his time. These and other similar questions are, no doubt, curious in themselves, and will always properly attract the attention of Biblical antiquaries But to Christians the Pen-

tateuch will always be, what it ever has been, to wit, the noblest record of the fact, that the Jewish nation was miraculously constituted the original depository of religious truth; and especially, that the doctrines of the unity of God and the great future destiny of mankind have been preserved for us by the sages and heroes of Israel amidst a succession of temptations and national calamities such as we can, at this remote time, but very imperfectly comprehend. It is mainly to our knowledge of, and belief in, the records of this Pentateuch, that we, "branches of the wild olive tree, have been able to be grafted into the good olive tree of God."

Again, it is, or should be, to Christians a matter of little, or, indeed, no consequence at all, that critics are able to hunt out certain discrepancies (very few and far between) throughout the historical records of the Bible. Nay, we should rather encourage legitimate criticism, for we fear none of its results, and we know, besides, that such a vast mass of writings as constitute the Holy Scriptures, coming down to us from the remotest ages, and requiring to be so frequently copied, could not have been preserved free from errors of transcription, or even occasional interpolation, unless indeed by a perpetual miracle. But when these errors of the scribes are honestly hunted up, and faithfully placed before us, we are astounded,—not certainly that they are found in the Sacred Records, but rather that they are so *few*, and refer to matters of such *trifling* importance. Are we to get up a sensation movement, forsooth, and rush out of the Christian fold with Parker and Strauss, because we cannot exactly reconcile the statements in the third chapter of the Book of Numbers, with respect to the Levitical families therein mentioned? or because the announcements in 2 Chron. xvi. 1, and 1 Kings xv. 33, do not altogether correspond? or because 2 Chron. xxxii. 2, is not sustained by xxxi. 20? or because 2 Chron. xxiv. 14, seems to be contradicted by 2 Kings xii. 13? These discrepancies, and such as these, occurring in the Old or New Testament, are certainly not such as to disturb the faith of rational beings. Again, when we encounter small critics, or even great critics, who are constantly asserting that the facts of geology and astronomy cannot be reconciled with many of the an-

nouncements of the Bible, we should encourage them to study their facts better, to brood over them for a few years, until they find out that they are perhaps the merest fragments of facts, or, probably, may be contradicted altogether by subsequent discoveries. If such critics know anything in reality of geology and astronomy, they must admit that these sciences impress the heart with an awful sense of the majesty of infinite time and endless space, and are thus, in common with the whole tenor of the Bible, proclaiming the presence of a God with whom a thousand years are but as one day.

It is remarkable, however, that our cavillers have pretty generally answered one another, and will no doubt continue to do so as long as cavilling continues to exist. Thus, the German sceptics, who first attracted notice, were known as *Naturalists*, or persons who pretended to explain all the Scripture miracles as simply natural occurrences. The *mythical* critics, represented by Strauss, pounced without mercy on the Naturalists, and proved their theory to be wholly untenable. Then came a rupture in the mythical party itself, and whilst they all announced that the Scripture history could only be regarded as a collection of myths or fables, no two of them held the same opinion as to when or how the myths began to grow, or at what time they took a written form, or what, if any, amount of fact these myths really contain. Here are questions as puzzling at least, as those Scriptural difficulties from which Strauss and his imitators made haste to escape. For a time, there was great excitement in the advanced theological circles, by the controversies of Strauss against Gabler, and Theodore Parker against De Wette. But these have passed, and as years fleet on, people are beginning, even in Germany, to see that it is easy to make objections to Christianity, but not so easy for the objectors to say what they really themselves believe. In England, the sympathisers are beginning to flag in the headlong career with which they were carried forward from one stage of unbelief to another. Some are actually returning to the stronghold of Christian faith, and warning others who still follow the speculators, to beware. Among those who have paused, and are setting their faces Zionward, is *Joseph*

Barker, a man of whom it might have been freely predicated, that he would not die in unbelief,—simply because he is blessed with a good heart and a clear head. He and other infidels of the same bold school, who honestly proclaimed themselves, were easily met and overthrown in argument; indeed they may be said to have overthrown themselves, as they kept constantly doubting even what they had previously persuaded themselves to acknowledge. But among the most plentiful sowers of tares in the Christian field are persons who, in many instances, occupy the position of pastors and teachers, and who are not much concerned about the future of the Gospel, provided it can only secure to them a life-interest in their pulpits. They do not openly assail the system by which they live, but they feed their flocks with the stale husks of infidel speculation. They do not say of Christ, away with him, but they say that his miracles, to which he himself so solemnly appealed as evidences of his authority, were simply a series of natural events which the excited imaginations of the original spectators entirely mistook for supernatural occurrences. They do not say of the Scripture narratives, that they are utterly useless, but they say that they are profitable for instruction in all that entered into the Jewish idea of a Messiah! Not one, probably, of this class of men can be termed an original thinker; they are all second-hand retailers of such novelties or negations of faith as can be gleaned from foreign literature. Their opinions, however advanced, have been taken entirely on trust, just as the most benighted persons are found to accept for Gospel what they may happen to glean from the pages of some pamphlet or tract. A. B.

CONGREGATIONAL MEMOIRS.

No. II.—LARNE AND KILWAUGHTER.—(*Continued from p. 55.*)

8. PARISH SCHOOLMASTERS.

"FEBRUARY, 1700.—Mr. Ogilvie reports he spoke to Mr. Campbell (of Cairncastle), anent Mr. May, who, he thinks, would be willing to let Mr. May go, but Ballygally, (*i.e.* Squire Shaw of Ballygally) has not will to let him go till next Hallow-day, that his son may be more perfect in his learning, so that this Session think it is too long to wait."

"FEBRUARY, 1700.—Mr. Ogilvie reports that there are some in

Old-town would have Patrick Plunkett * to take up School here, to teach English only. Some reply there is no need to have a master that can teach Latin, and for English, John Boyd may teach. [*Mem.*—The writer of this minute was John Boyd himself, Session Clerk.] There was no more spoken of this now."

"February, 1700.—The Session are acquainted that John Brown, who formerly was Schoolmaster in Tullywogn (?) is willing to come, at which the elders in Kilwochter are well satisfied. Mr. Ogilvie desired to write to him."

"The people of Kilwochter had advertisement, last Lord's day, to send their children to John Brown, and begin last Monday."

"March, 1700.—Mr. Ogilvie acquaints the Session that Mr. May has now offered himself to be schoolmaster here, and to enter at May-day. Deferred until he come to the Session, and declare upon what terms he will come and agree."

The Session Clerk, who was also Parish Schoolmaster in Larne, evidently wanted no rival near his throne.

9. SYNODICAL FEASTS AND FESTIVALS.

"May 19, 1700.—The Session are acquainted that the last Synod of Coleraine appointed a fast to be kept in their bounds, on Wednesday, 22nd May next. The main causes are three: 1, The persecuted and distressed Churches abroad; 2, The general wickedness and ungodliness of the time; 3, The great decay of the work of God in this time. N.B.—The fast was observed and kept here, and Mr. Ogilvie preached both forenoon and afternoon.

Sept., 1700.—Mr. Ogilvie also reports from the Synod that there hath been a fast kept in England already, and this Synod hath appointed a fast to be kept in their bounds, and also in the Belfast Synod, but that the day has not been determined until it be seen what order comes from the Government, lest their day and ours differ. Therefore it is deferred till we see what day the Government fixeth.

"Nov., 1700.—The Session are informed that the order has come out from authority concerning the fast, and that the day fixed is the first Friday of May next, which will be the 2nd day of May, and that the *authority*† has discharged the observing or keeping of Christmas, or any other festival holy days, because very much

* This schoolmaster lived in the Drain's Bog, in the Parish of Cairncastle, where still may be seen the ruins of the house which is said to have been his residence. Tradition also affirms that Patrick Plunkett, Parish Schoolmaster in Cairncastle in 1700, was the ancestor of the present Lord Plunkett, whose grandfather and great-grandfather are well known to have been Presbyterian ministers; the latter, Rev. Patrick Plunkett, officiating at Glennan, County Monaghan. This tradition I can neither confirm nor gainsay; but I am inclined to think that there may be something in it. Patrick is still a family name amongst the Plunketts. The first and great Lord Plunkett's father was Rev. Thomas Plunkett; and *his* father, Rev. Patrick Plunkett, Minister of Glennan, *may* very well have been son of Patrick Plunkett of Drain's Bog, who was Parish Schoolmaster of Cairncastle, in 1700.

† I apprehend that here and elsewhere "the authority" means the Civil Government of the day."

abuse has been made at such time, and needless cost and foolishness, keeping the people from going about their lawful and necessary employment.

"April, 1700.—The fast was intimated this day to be kept on Friday, 2nd May (N.B.—It was kept.) It is reported that it is only the Popish festival days that are discharged; but no word of discharging Christmas or other festivals as to Protestants."

10. MARRIAGE AND MISCELLANEOUS.

"May, 1700.—Reported that Synod has ordered, respecting parties going to be married, that their purpose of marriage shall be thereto proclaimed two Sabbaths at least, and, if there be a necessity, they may also be proclaimed on a lecture day of public worship."

The synodical overture declared "that the ancient and laudable custom of publishing marriage banns three several days of public worship, whereof two at least shall be Lord's Days, ought to be carefully observed." Similar overtures were adopted by Synod in 1700, 1701, 1711, 1742, 1755, and 1761.

"July, 1699.—Mr. Ogilvie is to be absent next Sabbath at Cairncastle Communion."

"May, 1700.—This day it was reported that there will not be sermon next Lord's day, as Mr. Ogilvie will be at Cairncastle communion, and the people are expected to repair thither, for hearing the word, *and to communicate*."

"June 15, 1700.—Mr. Ogilvie and James Caldwell report that the next Presbytery, in way of visitation, will be at Cairncastle on first Tuesday; and here the next Wednesday thereafter."

"July, 1700.—Reported that the Synod has appointed each minister within their bounds to give notice to their congregations to discover any deserter from the army, to have twenty shillings for his pains, and to declare that if any deserter will return to his colours, he shall be pardoned. This appointment was made by virtue of an [order] sent by authority to the Synod. This was done."

The old Session Book, from which I have quoted so largely, closes with the year 1701. Mr. Ogilvie's ministry and life ended in 1712. For the illustration of the period intervening between these two dates no Congregational records are now available; but a few extracts from other contemporary documents may be here inserted, as explaining the state of religious matters at this time among Ulster Presbyterians generally, and among the Presbyterians of Larne and Kilwaughter in particular; for I think there is every probability that the "difference in judgment and practice," which these extracts notice as then existing in the Irish Presbyterian Church, was the real cause of that schism in our Congregation which took

place soon afterwards (in 1715), although the dispute then turned nominally on the choice of a minister, which indeed has always served as an outlet for the waters of bitterness and contention. Regarded in this point of view, the following Synodical overture, which was adopted on the 6th of June, 1704, and which was apparently intended as a pacific act, is very significant:—

"This Synod, taking into their serious consideration the great danger this Church seems to be in at present of division by reason of some difference in judgment and practice amongst some ministers of the Church, do, for preventing the bad effects that may follow upon division, unanimously appoint and require all the members of this Synod to study brotherly love amongst themselves, and all mutual forbearance one toward another, carefully avoiding all misrepresentations or reflections one upon another, either publicly from their pulpits or privately in their conferences one with another, or in their practisings among their people, or writing to the prejudice of one another. And that every minister, to whose knowledge any transgression of this act shall come, shall forthwith faithfully and impartially delate the offender to the Presbytery whereof he is a member, who, upon his conviction, shall punish him suitable to the demerit of his offence, according to the known Church censures of admonition, rebuke, suspension, or deposition, as the Presbytery shall think fit."

Not exactly in the same spirit as the foregoing was the overture of the following year, viz:—

"At a General Synod at Antrim, June 5, 1705, it is overtured that such as are to be licensed to preach the Gospel subscribe to the Westminster Confession of Faith to be the confession of their faith, and promise to adhere to the doctrine, discipline, worship, and government of this Church, as also those who are licensed and have not subscribed to be obliged to subscribe before their being ordained among us."

Nothing is here said about those who had been *ordained* and had not subscribed. In this position, I am inclined to think, stood my predecessor Mr. Ogilvie, so that in all probability he was never called upon to subscribe the Westminster Confession. But the innovations which the Synod dreaded at this time amongst their ministers and people were as much in matters of worship as of doctrine. They apprehended, in some quarters, a hankering after the forms and ceremonies of the English Church. Wodrow, the Scottish minister and historian, writing to "Mr. Alexander M'Cracken, minister of the Gospel at Lisburn," under date Oct. 20, 1709, says—

"I am heartily sorry to hear of novelties like to be brought in

by Mr. James Kirkpatrick and Mr. Gowan,* their altering our ordinary practice on fast days, and haranguing instead of preaching upon a portion of Scripture, and spending the rest of time in prayer. . . . I heard that Mr. Kirkpatrick uses to kneel in time of public prayer in the Church, except when praying himself."

On June 28, 1710, Mr. M'Cracken writes to "Mr. Thomas Linning, minister of Lismahagow"—

"As to some innovations that are creeping in among us, we have said nothing of them at this time, notwithstanding the practice continues, and hath done so for some time before and since our former Synod."

And finally upon this point, Wodrow himself, writing to Mr. James Hoy, minister at Carnock, on Nov. 30, 1710, says—

"If my information fails me not, there is a general laxness of principle among too many of the new intrants to the ministry, even in the North of Ireland, and a mighty inclination to a conformity in everything to the English Dissenters and ministers of Dublin."—*Wodrow Correspondence*, iii. 70, 71, 154, 191.

The agitation above referred to in the Irish Presbyterian Church produced results, some of which I think we shall soon recognize as operating in the Congregation of Larne and Kilwaughter. But before proceeding further, we must now notice certain other matters of a more local and totally different character, in which Mr. Ogilvie and some of his congregation were concerned. In 1711, took place in Carrickfergus the trial for witchcraft of eight women connected with Island Magee and Broadisland, to which reference has been made in the memoir of the Ballycarry Congregation. My late friend, Mr. Samuel M'Skimin, the historian of Carrickfergus, published in 1822, at Belfast, from a rare old manuscript, a very curious Tract, of upwards of 50 pages, relating to this singular affair, which is now itself exceedingly rare, and well worth the attention of all who take an interest in such matters. It is entitled—"*A Narrative of the Sufferings of a Young Girl called Mary Dunbar, who was strangely*

* Mr. Kirkpatrick had been removed in 1706 from Templepatrick (where he had been ordained in 1699) to Belfast, where he was for a short time the colleague of Mr. M'Bride in the charge of the old Congregation, and in 1709 became the first minister of the Second Congregation of Belfast. He was the author of the well-known book called "Presbyterian Loyalty," which was published in 1713. Rev. Thomas Gowan, M.A., was ordained minister of Drumbo, near Belfast, in 1706. In 1716, he became minister of the Scots' Church at Leyden, in Holland, where he died.—*Reid*, p. iii. 137, 169.

molested by Spirits and Witches at Mr. James Hattridge's House, Parish of Island Magee, near Carrickfergus, in the County of Antrim and Province of Ulster, in Ireland, and in some other places to which She was removed during the time of Her Disorder, as also of the aforesaid Mr. Hattridge's House being Haunted with Spirits in the latter end of 1710 *and beginning of* 1711." To the narrative is appended a letter from Dr. Wm. Tisdall,* who was then Vicar of Belfast, giving "an account of the trial of eight reputed witches at Carrickfergus on the 31st March, 1711, and which letter first appeared in the *Hibernian Magazine* for January, 1775. From this "narrative" it appears that the person afflicted, Miss Mary Dunbar, whom Dr. Tisdall describes as "a young girl, aged about 18 years, with an open and innocent countenance, and a very intelligent young gentlewoman," was brought by her friends from Island Magee, where she was first afflicted, to the town of Larne, where she resided for a short time, where she had some of her most severe "fits" (if we may so call them), and where she was visited frequently by Mr. Ogilvie, Mr. Skevington (the Episcopalian minister of Larne), and many others. We are told that—

"On Tuesday morning, March 13 (1711), it was thought fit by

* This Dr. Tisdall was a famous and busy man in his day. It was to him that Dean Swift, writing in 1704, had characteristically said—"Pox on the Dissenters and Independents; I would as soon trouble my head to write against a louse or a flea." But the Dean's correspondent formed a different estimate of the men amongst whom he lived. He wrote no less than five pamphlets against the Presbyterians, one of which provoked from his fellow-townsman, Mr. James Kirkpatrick, the defence known as "Presbyterian Loyalty." Dr. Reid calls Dr. Tisdall an "inveterate libeller." This he may or may not have been; but his letter about the witches, even if he had written nothing else, would prove him to have been a shrewd, intelligent man, and a clear and pointed writer. He does, indeed, mention, with apparent satisfaction, that all the alleged witches were "every one Presbyterians"; and he insinuates that the Lord's Prayer, which they repeated at their trial, had been learned by them for the occasion in prison. But whilst he admits that "six of them had such strange variety of ill looks, that, had the afflicted person known them before, it might have given grounds to suspect that she had singled them out for her tormentors even from their diabolical appearance"; yet he adds that "the seventh was not so disagreeable, but had a sedate and composed countenance," and confesses "that the eighth was a young girl of about 17, who seemed by her countenance to have more of the Lancashire than Scotch witch, as she had a fair complexion and a very good face." Every one knows that "Lancashire witch" is a Lancashire phrase for a "comely lass." Dr. Tisdall died in 1735.

some of her relatives to take her out of the island to Mr. Stannus's * in the parish of Larne. . . . About two in the afternoon, she desired Mr. Ogilvie to pray for her, and during prayer she was in a fit. . . . On the following day, Mr. Ogilvie and several persons from Larne came to see her behaviour when Millar (one of the supposed witches) was present, and had her (*i.e.*, Janet Millar) brought in a second time, and it had the same effect as before, *i.e.*, she fell into an extraordinary ill fit, inasmuch that she could scarce be kept in the bed by three men. Upon which Millar (the supposed witch) was again carried into the barn, and Mr. Ogilvie asked her several questions as to her Christian faith, without receiving any satisfactory answer. He then asked her what she thought was the reason of the girl's being so ill when she approached her, and not so when others came near her; and what was the reason she had so exactly described her, having never seen her, nor heard of her but in her fits. She answered, after a surly manner, 'I believe the devil's in the lass.' On the 15th March, about three in the afternoon, she had a severe fit, and upon recovery told that Mrs. Ann (one of her tormentors) had been with her, and that she had been turned into a spider, and had gone away in that shape. John Getty, a merchant in Larne, saw something like a spider at the same time, being at that time with the girl, and he endeavoured to catch it, but could not. Soon after, she, in another fit, saw Mrs. Ann come as before, and go off as a spider, at which time John Getty, aforesaid, saw one on the bed, which he thought he catched, but, upon going to the fire to throw it into it, found he had it not." [This reminds one of Dean Swift's unsavoury comparison, already quoted, of Dissenters and Independents to certain troublesome little animals which shall be nameless.] "About ten at night she had several fits, and upon recovery, said that Mrs. Ann was with her, and lay upon her breast, and went off in the shape of a fly. The said Getty said he found something at that time strike him on the right thigh, though there was nothing visibly did it that time. . . On Saturday, the 17th of March, about two in the afternoon, she was sitting betwixt Mr. Ogilvie and Mr. Stannus, and complained of her arm, about which was tied a blue string with five knots upon it, and was eased upon cutting it off. A little after she had another fit, and upon re-

* I have reason to believe that the house in which Mr. Stannus, or (as the name was anciently spelled) Stenhouse, then lived, is the house which for many years was the hospitable residence of the late Mr. P. Agnew, of Larne, and which is now occupied by his son-in-law, Mr. John Macaulay. This house formerly belonged, as I understand, to a Mr. Nicholas Netterville (son of the Lord Netterville who lost his estates in 1691), and who was for a time agent to the Earl of Antrim. It then became the property of the Stannus, or Stenhouse, family above mentioned; and on Miss Stenhouse (or Stannus) marrying Mr. James Blair, son of Mr. W. H. Blair, of Blairmount, near Larne, it became the residence of her husband, who lived and died there. On the death of Mr. Blair, the house passed to the late Mr. P. Agnew's father, Mr. James Agnew, and then to Mr. P. Agnew himself, who, during a lengthened occupation, exercised within it a princely hospitality worthy of his ancient family who, at a very early period, had been "Lords of Larne."—*See M'Crie's Life of Sir Andrew Agnew*, p. 2.

covery, complained (that) her back and wrist were sorely pained. Mr. Skevington (Episcopalian), minister of Larne, and several others, were there with her, and found a white inkle string tied about her waist, with nine knots upon it, that a little before was three times round her neck, and as soon as it was taken from about her, she got ease. . . . On the 20th March she had many ill fits, and when Margaret Mitchell, of the parish of Kilroot, who had all the marks given in her description of Mrs. Ann, came into the room where she was, she discoursed with her without falling into a fit; but, in great terror, accused her of being one of her greatest tormentors. Mr. Ogilvie desired her to be cautious of what she did in accusing any person of so great a crime. The girl told him that as she should answer to God at the great day of appearance, she was the person who went under the name of Mrs. Ann amongst her tormentors. . . . On the morning of the 25th March, after a good night's rest, she wanted the power of her tongue, but was otherwise very well, as she signified by signs. During the course of that day she had a strong apprehension, as she said afterwards, that if she read the 2nd chapter of Job, she should have the power of her tongue, upon which she made signs for a Bible, and reading over the chapter to the 9th verse, she spake, and praised God for the same. Afterwards she continued in very good health till the 29th, and walked to see the minister of the place and several others in Larne."

Certainly what with "revivals" in 1617, as detailed in a previous paper, witchcraft in 1711, as now described, and "revivals" again, as witnessed by us all a few years ago, the quiet little town of Larne has beheld some strange scenes. In connexion with this case of the witches, Mr. Ogilvie was examined as a witness at the trial in Carrickfergus, as were also Messrs. Skevington, Adair, and Cobham; but their evidence has not been preserved, which is unfortunate, for I am sure it would have been very curious, and well worth reading. The trial lasted from six in the morning till two in the afternoon; and the prisoners, being found guilty by the jury, were sentenced to be imprisoned twelve months, and to stand four times in the pillory in Carrickfergus.*

* After reading the account of the Island Magee Witches in 1711, it relieves one's feelings of local attachment to find in Wodrow's Correspondence (ii. 505) a report of "the affair of the Torphichen Witches," which took place in Scotland in 1720—nine years later than our case—and to learn from Wodrow's editor, that the Scottish historian and his correspondent Cotton Mather—"were firm believers in witchcraft, a belief which was quite common in their time." So that all that can be said about our neighbourhood in this matter is, that in 1711 it was not in advance of the rest of Christendom.

(*To be continued.*)

HALF-HOURS WITH A SUNDAY-SCHOOL CLASS.

JESUS TEACHING IN SOLOMON'S PORCH.

THE present lesson is contained in John x. 22—38. It is unnecessary to quote the passage, as it may be easily referred to. In order to understand it, it is desirable first to consider any words or phrases employed, respecting which the children may not, probably, have clear ideas. In the first verse the feast of the Dedication is mentioned, and it will be right to draw attention to the several Jewish feasts—the Passover, the feast of Pentecost, and the feast of Tabernacles,—stating in a sentence or two the events commemorated in them; and particularly to explain the Dedication, as a feast of later origin, and therefore not alluded to in the Old Testament. The temple had been profaned by Antiochus Epiphanes, when he took the city of Jerusalem, more than 160 years before the birth of our Lord: and three years after, the city was retaken by Judas Maccabaeus, and the sacred building was purified with great pomp and solemnity. From that time it was customary to celebrate the event annually, and the solemnities continued for a week, commencing in the middle of December. As the time of the feast of Dedication was fixed, it might seem needless to add that it was "winter," but the word translated "winter" is probably employed to signify that there was storm and rain at the time, and hence our Lord did not linger in the open space around the temple to instruct those who came to him, but sought the shelter afforded by one of the piazzas. A minute or two may be advantageously employed in giving the children some idea of the seasons and climate of Palestine: they can thus realize more vividly many of the scenes to which the Gospel narrative introduces them. "Solomon's Porch" was the most splendid of the porticos of the temple; it was on the eastern side, and was supported by marble pillars of great beauty: it was believed to be the only remaining part of the original temple built by Solomon, and hence its name. It is important to impress children by continued repetition with the meaning of the term "Christ," showing them that it is not employed to designate a person, but the office which it was confidently expected would soon be conferred on some chosen one for the be-

nefit of the nation. Thus we find the Jews perplexed to know whether Jesus was "the Christ." The "works" to which our Lord appeals as evidence of his being the Christ are his miracles, which, as he truly declares, prove that God had sent him. "Sheep" is a term figuratively employed to signify those whom he loved and who believed on him; and in a country in which a pastoral life was common, it very happily denoted the disinterested care which he bore for his disciples. "One" in this and many other passages expresses *unity* of feeling and interest, and does not appear ever to signify oneness of person or being. While Jesus says that he and his Father are "one," he also speaks of himself and his disciples being "one" (John xvii. 11, 21); and Paul (1 Cor. iii. 8) represents himself and Apollos as "one"—not of course one being or person, but one in sentiment and in efforts for the spread of the Gospel and the redemption of the world. "Blasphemy" signifies any words which tend to derogate from the glory of Jehovah. "Gods," strange as the word sounds to the Christian, who truly believes that there is but one God, is not of unfrequent occurrence in the Scriptures,—sometimes denoting the false gods of the heathens, and sometimes, as in this passage, magistrates or rulers possessing authority over the Jewish people. Thus we find it used in the 1st and the 6th verses of the 82nd Psalm, to which reference is here made by our Lord.

Having thus explained any words in the lesson of which the class might not otherwise have a clear understanding, the children may read it over in alternate verses, or one of them may be asked to read the whole passage; and the teacher may then, in a few sentences, present to them the whole scene, so as to render it intelligible, interesting, and instructive. Jesus had gone to the temple, in whose courts the people at stated times were accustomed to assemble, not only to offer their customary worship, but also to converse on any matters of interest that arose. It was the depth of winter, and with others he sought the shelter of the royal piazza. Several Jews inquired of him whether he was really the Christ, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense?" Jesus replied that he had already declared to them that he was; but in order to remove their doubts, he told them to consider his miracles as the clearest proof that he was indeed

sanctified and sent by God: and then, alluding to their strong prejudices, he says they are not of his sheep, and speaks of some who were his attached and devoted disciples, whom no efforts of his enemies could estrange from him: they were the objects not only of his love, but also of his Father's; in love towards them and care for them, he and his Father were "one." For a moment the religious zeal of the Jews was provoked, and they threatened to stone Jesus, charging him with uttering blasphemy. He patiently reasoned with them, and showed that he had only called himself the Son of God, speaking of God as his Father; and that, even if he had applied to himself the title of God, he would not have been blaspheming, for those who held any authority under God were so called in their Scriptures, and with much more reason might the term be applied to "him whom the Father had sanctified and sent into the world;" and then, appealing again to his miracles, he declares the intimate union which he enjoyed with his Father, and the authority he derived from him. From the passage thus examined we may draw the following lessons:—

1. Jesus appeals to his miracles in proof of his mission from God. If we deny his miracles, we must either disbelieve the Saviour's own words, or regard the Gospel narrative as untrue.

2. Jesus and his Father are one—not, as he himself plainly argues, one being, but united and working together for the redemption of the world.

3. The term "God" is sometimes employed in the Scriptures in a subordinate sense; so that its application to any person does not necessarily imply that he is the supreme God.

4. Jesus distinctly declares himself to be the Son of God, and this seems to be the great distinguishing title by which he seeks to be designated, and under which he desires to be made known to the world.

5. If God sanctified Christ, and sent him into the world, and if, in the great scheme of the Gospel, they are "one," we may implicitly rest on all the Saviour's promises, and heartily believe his doctrines and precepts, not as the results of human inquiry and meditation, but emphatically as the "wisdom of God."

A SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER.

A CONTRADICTION AND A CONFIRMATION.

THE "BUBBLE" SCENE AT BALLYCLARE.

THE following communication, referring to a statement in our number for July last, will sufficiently explain itself:—

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN UNITARIAN.

SIR,—I have taken some trouble to find out what truth, if any, was in your published statement, that on a certain Sunday the Rev. John Hall had a table placed in front of the pulpit, put a young girl on it with a tin of soap suds in one hand and a tobacco pipe in the other, and set her to blow bubbles that he might thus illustrate certain properties of the atmosphere. Herewith I enclose letters that show that the story had no foundation in fact. In the interests of truth and justice I request the insertion of this note and the accompanying letters in your forthcoming number of *The Christian Unitarian*.—I am, &c., &c.,

TOPSHAM, 15*th March*, 1864. JAMES COOPER.

To the Rev. James Cooper, &c.

DEAR SIR,— . . . During the time of litigation I was so busily occupied in preparing for the trial I had not time to engage in controversy with my opponents about the statements they were circulating regarding me. Now that the trial is over, and the result every thing that I can wish, I was unwilling to commence a dispute with regard to the petty attacks made on me from time to time, lest in this personal warfare the minds of the public should be withdrawn from the victory I have obtained, and fixed on things of less moment. When, however, a question is asked by you, with regard to an alleged fact, I feel it imperative to give you a distinct answer, because, under such circumstances, silence would be regarded as an admission of the truth of the statement.

I never, upon any time or occasion, either before the congregation or before the Sunday-school, put a girl upon a table to blow soap bubbles.

At different periods I was in the habit of reading to the children in the Sunday-school such works as Paley's Natural Theology, M'Cullough's illustrations of the attributes and being of a God, and making remarks upon different subjects connected with natural religion.

On some occasions there were public examinations of the children, when several members of the Congregation attended, and, at the close of these, public worship commenced. The school was held in the morning of the day, and dismissed in time for divine service. The thing, however, referred to by *The Christian Unitarian* never occurred at all.—Yours truly,

BALLYCLARE, *Dec.* 24, 1863. JOHN HALL.

To the Rev. James Cooper, Topsham.

DEAR SIR,—Mr. Hall called on me this morning to show me a letter he had received from you, also a copy of a letter written to

you by Mr. George Ledlie. I have only to say, in reply, that the whole story is a fabrication; such a thing never took place. After Mr. Hall came to Ballyclare, he opened a class on Saturdays for the young people belonging to the congregation; all who chose to attend were instructed free. We were taught Arithmetic, Astronomy, Natural Philosophy, and other branches. I was a member of the class and a Sabbath scholar. Besides, Mr. Hall was in the habit occasionally of asking us a few questions on Sunday, in presence of any of the members who happened to come in before divine service commenced. I remember, on one occasion, Mr. Hall asked me a number of questions on the subject of Electricity. It was on Sunday before divine service commenced. I believe most of the Congregation were present in their pews, and appeared to be pleased with the attention Mr. Hall was paying to the improvement of the younger members of the Congregation. The examination was over before the hour of divine service, on this, and every other occasion. I repeat again, the story of blowing bubbles is all *a lie*. I never did, of my own accord, or by the request of Mr. Hall, at any time, do such a thing, and further, I never saw a pipe or soap and water in the meeting-house.—I am, dear Sir, yours respectfully,

MARY ANN MILLIKIN.

BALLYCLARE, *Feb.* 4, 1864.

Session House of the Old Presbyterian Meeting-House, Ballyclare, 21st February, 1864.

MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE OLD PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION OF BALLYCLARE.

To the Rev. James Cooper.

SIR,—The Rev. John Hall having brought before us a correspondence between himself and you, regarding a statement published in *The Christian Unitarian*, that on a Sunday during the hour of divine service, he placed a girl on the table and caused her to blow soap-bubbles,—we take the liberty of troubling you with the present communication. You have already a denial upon the part of Mr. Hall, and also Mrs. Millikin, the person said to have been placed upon the table.

We believe the answer returned by Mrs. Millikin and Mr. Hall to be true in every respect, and we regard the story as a mere fabrication, calculated for the purpose of injuring the reputation of our minister and damaging the cause of religious liberty in this neighbourhood.

Having now given this contradiction to the allegations in *The Christian Unitarian*, we do not intend to be drawn into any further discussion upon the matter: after the remarks made by the Judge when the case of the Ballyclare Congregation was heard in Dublin, we leave the public to judge whether they will believe our declaration, or that made by the ministers of the Northern Presbytery and their supporters in this neighbourhood.

If any doubt still exists in the minds of the community upon

this matter, we believe it will be fully removed whenever a full report of the trial is published.

HUGH GILMER, *Chairman.*

P.S.—We decline sending any letter to *The Christian Unitarian* for publication, but you are at liberty to make any use of this communication which you please. H. G., *Chairman.*

[Having thus published at length, as in justice we were bound to do, the letters which Mr. Cooper has procured, contradicting our statement respecting Mr. Hall and the "soap-bubble scene," we owe it to ourselves, and to the parties on whose authority we made the statement, to give equal publicity to the following documents, which, as we conceive, confirm to the letter everything we wrote. We do not enter into any analysis of the conflicting evidence submitted to our readers, nor do we institute any comparison between the parties on the score of credibility; but with reference to the letter drawn up by Mr. Hall's Committee, we think it right to remark that we never stated nor supposed that the "bubble scene" was enacted "during the hour of divine service;" we believed that it must have been either before service commenced, or after it was closed, and not have been, as seems to be implied in the Committee's letter, dove-tailed into the service as a sequel to the morning prayer, or an introduction to the sermon.—ED. CH. UN.]

To the Editor of the Christian Unitarian.

SIR,—I have been informed that the Rev. John Hall has, in a letter to an English minister, denied the truth of the statement in the July number of *The Christian Unitarian*, respecting the "blowing of bubbles" on a certain Sunday in the Old meeting-house of Ballyclare, in the presence of the Congregation. I cannot believe that Mr. Hall ever wrote any such letter. On the occasion referred to, I was present, with many others, in the Meeting-house at the usual hour for commencing public worship, and I saw a girl on the table in front of the pulpit with a tobacco pipe blowing bubbles; and so disgusted were some members of the Congregation with the unseemly exhibition, that they immediately rose and left the Meeting-house. I refrain from stating the very strong language used by one old gentleman, when walking out of the house. The matter was publicly talked about at the time, and no one would then have denied the truth of it. Many other ridiculous acts of Mr. Hall's might be mentioned, but no good could arise from prolonging such a controversy.—I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

JAMES ALEXANDER.

SIZE HILL, BALLYCLARE, *March* 16, 1864.

I beg to say I was present in Ballyclare Meeting-house on a certain Sunday,—saw Mr. Hall, in the presence of his Congregation, put a girl on a table,—saw her with a pipe in her hand, and

saw a goblet with a liquid, apparently soap suds; heard Mr. Hall order her to blow; saw the bubbles coming from the pipe. The girl's name was Mary Anne Cameron—now Mrs. James Milikin.

Ballygallagh, 16*th March*, 1864. Margaret Simpson.

Sir,—I was for many years a teacher in the Sunday-school connected with Mr. Hall's Congregation, and on a certain Sunday, after the Sunday-school was closed and the Congregation assembled, I saw Mr. Hall put a young girl on a table in front of the pulpit. She had a pipe in her hand, and I saw the bubbles coming from the head of the pipe. The girl's name was Mary Anne Cameron.

Ballygallagh, *March* 16, 1864. E. J. Simpson.

Sir,—I was present on a Sunday in Ballyclare Meeting-house. The Congregation was assembled. I saw a girl on a table in front of the pulpit blowing what appeared to be soap-bubbles. She had the pipe in her mouth. The liquid was in a tin or tumbler. The bubbles were flying through the meeting-house. I was in my seat in front of the gallery. Mary Anne Cameron was the girl, now Mrs. James Milikin. I have frequently mentioned this before any dispute took place. Mr. Hall directed the exhibition.

Ballyclare, *March* 16, 1864. Jane M'Dowell.

Sir,—I have acted as sextoness for many years in Ballyclare Meeting-house, and in that capacity I removed from the front of the pulpit a table, a goblet, and a new tobacco pipe. While in the session-house, I was asked in to see bubbles blown.

Eliza Corry.

INTELLIGENCE.

NEW UNITARIAN CHURCH, SAN FRANCISCO.

A large and splendid Church has been erected by the Unitarian Society of San Francisco, under the pastorate of the Rev. Thomas Starr King, and was opened for public worship on Sunday, January 10. The building is in the Italian Gothic style, and is to be surmounted by a lofty tower. The cost of its erection was £18,000, and, chiefly by the exertions of the gifted and energetic pastor, the whole cost has already been defrayed, while the old church, erected not many years ago, has been reserved for a second Unitarian Congregation. We give the following sketch of the opening services from the letter of a member of the congregation to his former minister in Boston:—"We enter the church and find it rapidly filling with people, for the hour approaches that is to see this building consecrated and dedicated by thanksgiving, praise, and prayer, to the living God. After the voluntary, the chairman of the building committee, in a few well-chosen words, gives a history of the enterprise from its conception in 1861, to its final completion at the present time. He states that the most

sanguine expectations of its friends have been realized, and that now he has the satisfaction of presenting, on behalf of the committee, to the society, as a free gift, this edifice reared at an expense of about ninety thousand dollars. The swelling notes of the organ and the sweet tones of the choir now alternate with the rich voice of the pastor in the chant: next an original hymn; then the outpouring of the full soul in the prayer of gratitude, supplication, and dedication: this is followed by the Te Deum, a scriptural lesson, and an original hymn by the the Rev. C. A. Bartol. Then came the reading of letters from 'Eastern clergymen,'—the Rev. Messrs. Cheevey and Alger, and Drs. Hedge and Dewey,—overflowing with sympathy and Christian fellowship, clothed in most touching and eloquent language. The address by the pastor followed: this was the outpouring of a heart that had watched and waited, laboured and prayed, and which now saw its labours rewarded, its prayers answered. Another original hymn by a member of the parish is sung—the benediction pronounced—and the morning exercises are over.

"The scene changes. 'Tis evening now.' The vast throng have again assembled. We are in the shadow of night, and yet through those broad panes along the crowning arch the softened beams are shedding a grateful light, making, if possible, all around more gratifying to the eye of taste then the morning spectacle. The pastor enters, followed and supported as in the morning by 'the pillars of the church,' but with no clerical brother to share the labour, or give the counsel of wisdom, or word of congratulation. Alone he stands, 'unshaken through the strife of storms,' a host in himself, in the cause of Freedom, Humanity, and Religion. The exercises proceed. The voluntary, the responsive chant, a hymn by Dr. Hedge, the prayer, the Canticle, the Scripture lesson, another hymn by Andrews Norton, have each and all engaged our attention; and now comes the sermon on Worship, from John iv. 23—'But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.' I will not attempt to give you even an abstract of this discourse, but leave you to imagine what such a topic would bring forth from such a man, on such an occasion. Once more the deep tones of the organ reverberate along the walls, and a thousand voices make the aisles ring, as they join in pouring forth their praises in the words of the dear old doxology—

'From all that dwell below the skies,
Let the Creator's praise arise.'

The benediction is pronounced,—the gathered multitude disperse —and the temple stands consecrated to its sacred purposes."

DEATH OF THE REV. THOMAS STARR KING.

Not many weeks after the opening of the new and spacious Church in San Francisco, erected mainly by the energy and perseverance of the gifted and noble-minded pastor of the Congregation, the telegraphic wires flashed the following sad and startling news across the American continent from the Pacific to the Atlantic coast,—"March 4. Thomas Starr King died very suddenly this morning.

Illness, Diptheria. Sick only a few days." A later telegram states that "his death was a wonderfully triumphant indication of his character, his life, and his religion. Resigned, trustful, and conscious to the last moment, he calmly made every preparation, and yielded his soul to God. His funeral took place on March 7. The assemblage of people was greater than on any similar occasion for years. All the Christian denominations participated. The Federal and State officials were present." In addition to the high place which Mr. King held among the inhabitants of his adopted city, by his commanding eloquence and devotedness to the work of the Christian ministry, he had thrown himself heartily into the Federal cause, and by his personal exertions and lectures in various parts of California, he had been mainly instrumental in preserving the Golden State to the Union. His death is felt to be one of the heaviest losses that could have befallen the Unitarian denomination and the country. He was in his 41st year, and had been minister of the Church in San Francisco since the summer of 1860. On the Sunday following the intelligence of Mr. King's death, commemoration services were held in several of the Boston Churches, and touching tributes were paid to his genius and his worth. It has been arranged that the Rev. Dr. Bellows, of New York, will go to California for six months; by such an arrangement the Eastern Churches are doing much to sustain the society at San Francisco, thus suddenly bereft of a devoted and beloved pastor.

UNITARIANISM IN AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND.

Through the kindness of a friend we have been favoured with a report of the first half-yearly meeting of the Unitarian Congregation recently formed in Auckland. It was held on January 6, 1864, in the Odd Fellows' Hall. Mr. F. Bradley having been voted to the chair, called on the Secretary, who read the following report:—

"On the evening of June 11th, 1863, a few friends, entertaining Unitarian sentiments, met together to consider the possibility of opening a place for public worship here in accordance with their views; and, believing there was a good prospect of success, they resolved that the attempt should be made. Accordingly, a public meeting of those friendly to the movement was held in the Hall of the Mechanics' Institute, the attendance was highly satisfactory, and a committee was appointed for the purpose of making all necessary arrangements. Mr. F. Bradley, formerly minister of the Unitarian Congregations of Crediton, in England, and of Ravara, in Ireland, (but who has now relinquished the clerical profession,) having expressed his willingness to conduct the services for a time until the society might feel justified in inviting a minister to take permanent charge, it was resolved to accept his offer.

"Public worship was commenced in the Odd Fellows' Hall on 28th June, and has since been continued every Sunday morning and evening. The attendance at both services has been considerably larger than even the most sanguine at first ventured to anticipate. More especially has this been the case at the evening lectures, which have usually been illustrative of the leading features of Unitarian Christianity. It is gratifying to know that, even during the short period of the humble effort, many prejudices have been removed, and that several persons

by whom the doctrines of Unitarianism were previously unknown or unfavourably regarded, have been led to take an interest in the movement; and it is believed that in some instances converts have been made.

"It is also satisfactory to the Committee to be able to state that, although the Society is neither large nor affluent, yet its funds have covered all expenses incurred during the six months of its existence, and the number of subscribers is steadily increasing. The Committee therefore feel justified in recommending the augmentation of Mr. Bradley's salary, for the ensuing half-year, to £150 per annum.

"Thus far the experiment has been so successful that the Committee entertain no doubt that a Unitarian Congregation may be permanently established in Auckland; and they believe that the spirit of inquiry upon religious subjects, which is now awakened here as in many other parts of the world, is highly favourable to the undertaking. The Committee therefore recommend that the necessary steps should be immediately taken to obtain the services of a settled minister; and also for the erection of a place of worship at as early a period as practicable."

The statement of accounts to the end of the year 1863 was next submitted; it showed a small balance in the hands of the Treasurer. Resolutions were then passed to the effect, that application be made to the British and Foreign Unitarian Association to send out a properly qualified person to take charge of the Congregation, Mr. Bradley having declined to do so except as a temporary supply, and that steps be taken forthwith to erect a suitable building for public worship.

DOMESTIC MISSION TO THE POOR OF BELFAST.

On Monday evening, April 11th, the annual meeting of this useful institution was held in the Upper School-room of the Mission House, Stanhope Street,—the Rev. W. Bruce, President of the Society, in the chair. A hymn having been sung, the Chairman opened the meeting with prayer. The Secretary, Mr. J. M. Darbishire, read the report of the General Committee, which was of a most satisfactory kind. Among other details it mentioned that a missionary's house and a mission station had been erected in the course of the year and were now nearly ready. The mission station contains a large Committee-room and a lavatory, and on the first floor a commodious and well-lighted room fitted up for preaching and performing other religious services in connexion with the Mission. The report also mentioned a bequest of £100 left by the late Miss Dunville to assist the Industrial School in connexion with the Unitarian Domestic Mission, which sum they had received through W. Dunville, Esq. The Secretary next read the report of the Ladies' General Committee. It gave a favourable account of the working of the Dorcas Society, and also of the Provident Society. It then referred as follows to a new agency which they have established:—

"Third on our list is the *Missing-Link Agency*, which is supported and directed by this Committee, some of its members devoting themselves to the special superintendence of the agent employed. This junior branch of your Charity has now entered on the second year of its existence, and its managers feel perfect confidence in the great utility of this addition to the Domestic Mission;—they feel that without interfering with the established Institution, they have riveted an humble but most useful link in the chain of higher

agencies already in force. They do not think it necessary to give a statistical account of the labours of their Poor Woman; they do not enumerate the visits paid, though they extend over at least 70 families,—the ignorant read to,—the sick attended and strengthened with nourishment prepared by her hands,—or the weary and faint-hearted mothers cheered by her womanly sympathy and encouragement;—but they know of much good which has been done by these means, and of families raised from a state of hopelessness and carelessness. An instance, perhaps, may not be out of place. A woman afflicted with the ill-usage and poverty caused by a drunken husband, and who herself was formerly tainted with the same vice, but who has now given it up, has declared that she would have sunk altogether under her misery, had she not been supported by the words and deeds of kindness bestowed on her by her Poor Visitor. Another family, seven of whom were struck down in fever, were, under Providence, restored to health by the kind aid given them—in this case chiefly by your minister; he, however employed our agent in preparing the food suitable to their state. These people express the deepest gratitude to Mr. Bowring for what he has done for them. The ladies wish to acknowledge here the kind co-operation they have received from Mr. B. in the management of their agency,—all working together unitedly in the good cause, and endeavouring by spiritual and material means to aid their fellow-creatures."

The Report further adds:—"In connection with the Female Mission, a meeting of Mothers and Young Women has been held in Stanhope Street, on one evening in the week throughout the winter. It is presided over by one lady each night, and attended by their agent, who instructs the sewers. Each meeting is opened by reading a short passage of Scripture. Work is then commenced, material being purchased and cut out previously, and deposits are received, no article being taken out until paid for—only one penny being allowed in the shilling's worth; and some instructive book, generally a sanatory tract, is read aloud. The meeting is concluded by prayer, your minister usually attending at its close."

The Rev. J. S. Porter submitted a report of the Day and Evening Schools, and the Rev. T. Bowring gave a lengthened and very interesting report of his missionary labours. We regret that we can only give the following extracts:—

"A letter appeared, a short time since, in the papers, from a gentleman who had visited our town from the South of Ireland, and the writer dilated in the most glowing terms on our industry, energy, and prosperity. I believe every word thus recorded was true; but it is the old story of the white and black sides of the shield. The writer saw the white side only. The domestic visitor sees but too much of the black—very black it occasionally appears. Many persons are out of work; many are ill and cannot work; many are, from unaccountable causes, in a very destitute state. The late winter must have severely tried numbers. It is very dreadful to lie cold at night; yet there were those who had not a bed to rest on, with no bed-covering save their own poor rags of garments, hardly sufficient for the purposes of decency. Several of our kind-hearted

ri e nds looked up pieces of carpets, rugs, &c., and these we had sewn together, whilst Mrs. Moncrieff and I had great pleasure in giving such articles to wrap round at night. Two or three of the recipients shed tears. A lady, whose hand is ever open to deeds of charity, most kindly purchased some blankets, and put them at our disposal for the same purpose. May the generous example provoke a generous emulation!

"We have yet to lament the prevalence of drunkenness. Nor is it easy to exaggerate the evils that flow from this sin alone; they are potent and unmistakeable. Distressing cases of the kind come under frequent observation. The accursed appetite for liquor is the bane of social life; it beggars the purse, degrades the intellect, ruins the soul. I was a few weeks since requested to go to the house of a man who, from moral weakness, from inability to say *no*, had returned to his sin after some months of abstinence. Bad companionship, then wages spent at the whiskey shop,—an empty cupboard, a desolate hearth. His wife earnestly desired me to come to the house on an evening when he might be met with, after the day's work was done; and one night I went for the purpose of expostulating with him. I was fortunate enough to find him at home, and sat for some time conversing with the family, at the same moment taking occasion to point out the nature of the sin he was committing, and the danger he thus incurred to his eternal interests. I spoke to him plainly, and yet, as I trust, kindly; read some parts of Scripture, and prayed with them. The man appeared to be much affected, and repeated the Lord's Prayer with much feeling. I shall watch here with interest; a brand may yet be plucked from the burning.

"Our religious services continue to be well attended. The large room is occasionally well filled, and at times the number present is most encouraging, the deepest attention being manifested. Sunday is a busy day with us all. The School-room is a hive of industry. Rules for the government of the Sunday School have been adopted, and being printed in a large type, and hung up conspicuously, have had great effect in maintaining order. The rules, with comments, are also frequently read to the Schools. The teachers, to whom we are all most deeply indebted, are distinguished for their zeal as well as aptitude for the work. The Sunday instruction is, as I humbly conceive it ever should be, exclusively religious, and as our teachers are themselves highly educated, the quality of the instruction given is of the first order."

Resolutions adopting the Report and Treasurer's Statement of Accounts, recommending the interests of the Mission, expressing sympathy with the Missionary, returning thanks to the ladies for their exertions, and electing Officers for the ensuing year, were spoken to by Mr. H. Darbishire, Mr. W. Spackman, Rev. C. J. M'Alester, Mr. A. M'Mechan, Mr. A. O'D. Taylor, Dr. Brice Smith, Mr. J. Campbell, Mr. L. Drennan, Mr. M. Andrews, Rev. J. S. Porter and Mr. W. Campbell. On the motion of Mr. J. Kennedy, seconded Mr. J. M. Darbishire, a vote of thanks was passed to the chairman, and the proceedings were terminated with singing and prayer.

Unitarian Young Men's Christian Association.—A lecture on the "Relation of Knowledge to Civilization" was delivered in connexion with this institution on Tuesday evening, March 22, in the Corn Exchange, by the Rev. John Orr of Comber. The chair was taken by Dr. Young. The lecture was characterised by much thought and research, with great felicity of illustration. The paralyzing effects of ignorance and superstition on the mind were graphically depicted in the case of the negroes of equatorial Africa. Knowledge, on the other hand, was shown to be light and liberty to the soul—though knowledge was of little worth, unaccompanied by the moral principle. The late Mr. Buckle's striking originality of views, and palpable one-sidedness, were well displayed. A vote of thanks, proposed by Mr. Spackman, and seconded by Mr. W. H. Greer, was carried by acclamation, and handsomely conveyed to the reverend lecturer by the chairman.

Sunday School Teachers' Union.—A meeting of this Society was held on Wednesday evening, March 9th, in the vestry of the Second Meeting-house, Belfast—the Rev. C. J. M'Alester in the chair. The introductory devotional services were conducted by the Rev. T. Bowring, and an interesting paper was read by Mr. W. H. Greer on "The Sunday School Work," in which he gave the results of his own experience as a Sunday School teacher, and threw out some important suggestions for the management of a school. The paper was followed by a lengthened conversation on the several topics discussed, in which the Revs. J. Jellie and T. Bowring and the Chairman took part. A cordial vote of thanks was passed to Mr. Greer, and the meeting was closed with singing and the benediction.—On Monday evening, April 4, another meeting was held, Mr. T. A. Hill in the chair. After the usual devotional services, conducted by the Rev. C. J. M'Alester, the Rev. T. Bowring read an interesting and instructive paper on "New Testament Palestine," in which he gave a succinct sketch of its leading features, principal divisions, and most important localities. A vote of thanks was tendered to Mr. Bowring for his valuable paper and for his uniform attention to the interests of the Sunday-school Teachers' Union. The Rev. John Jellie closed the meeting with prayer.

OBITUARY.

Died, at Castlereagh, on March 30th, Elizabeth, daughter of the late Mr. Gawn Orr.

Died, at Fairfield, Glasnevin, near Dublin, Mary, relict of the late Rev. Joseph Hutton, A.M.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Communications for the Editor, to be addressed by post to Rev. C. J. M'Alester, Holywood; or, otherwise, to 45, Arthur Street, Belfast.

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RENAN'S LIFE OF JESUS.*

THE title of M. Rénan's book sufficiently indicates that he does not profess to be a believer in the personage whose history he undertakes to discuss. A Christian writer would have entitled his book, if he had composed one on the same theme, a *Life of Christ*, or of *Christ Jesus*. By omitting the word which marks his divine authority as the Son of God and Saviour of the world, M. Rénan intimates that he rejects all the claims that Jesus himself, or his disciples on his behalf, may have put forward to the possesion of such a character. But he goes farther. He admits expressly that he does not believe in Christianity, without qualification. Speaking of his own fitness for the task which he has undertaken, he says—

"If to be fond of a subject can be a help to the understanding of it, it will, I hope, be acknowledged that this condition has not been wanting in me. To compose the history of a religion, it is necessary *first* to have believed in it once (otherwise the writer cannot comprehend by what means it has charmed and satisfied the human consciousness); and *secondly*, to believe in it no longer in an unqualified way (*d'une manière absolue*); for absolute faith is incompatible with sincere history."—P. lix.

Both these points appear to us to be open to dispute; in fact, to be paradoxical; but we do not stop to discuss them now. It is sufficient for us to point out that the historian who describes himself in these terms, avows that his work is not to be regarded as written by one within, but beyond the limits of the Church and its faith.

* Histoire des Origines du Christianisme: Livre Ier. Vie de Jésus: par Ernest Rénan, Membre de l'Institut. Neuvième Edition. Paris, 1863. 8vo.—History of the Infancy of Christianity: Book I. The Life of Jesus: by Ernest Renan, Member of the Institute. Ninth Edition. Paris, 1863. 8vo.

We applaud M. Rénan's honesty in making this avowal; but we fear it will give great offence to those who, holding the same opinions, would wish to retain their positions and offices as expounders of the Gospel. Whatever may be thought of M. Rénan's book, every one must admit that its author deserves the praise of being a truthful, honest, and earnest man. We are far from ranking him with the common herd of infidels. There is no coarseness in his style; he is in general free from the intolerant dogmatism which disgusts and offends in the writings of some who have made Christianity the object of their attacks. He is a well-read scholar; his book, though not free from the affectations of modern French rhetoric, is characterized by a lively and graceful tone of thought, occasionally rising to eloquence; and he is free from many of those obstinate prejudices which have rendered so many other sceptics blind to the force of the plainest arguments, and the evidence of the clearest facts. Hence he makes admissions in some places which completely overturn his objections in others. But what his work thus loses in logical consistency, is gained in the favourable impression which is inspired by his apparent openness and sincerity. We by no means look upon Rénan as equal to his German predecessor, Strauss, in closeness and vigour of thought; but his work is much less disagreeable to read, and doubtless will produce an effect on many minds, which the relentless logic of the simply destructive German would fail to influence.

The dedication of the book affords a fair sample of its affectation, its eloquence, and its inconsistency.

"*To the Pure Spirit of my sister Henriette, who died at Byblos, on the 24th Sept.*, 1861.

"Dost thou remember, in the bosom of God where thou reposest, those long days at Ghazir, when, alone with thee, I was writing these pages, inspired by the places we had visited in company? Silent by my side, thou perusedst each leaf, and copiedst it as soon as written; whilst the sea, the villages, the glens, the mountains were spread at our feet. When the oppressive light of day had given place to the countless host of stars, thy acute and nicely discriminating questions, thy judicious doubts, drew me back to the sublime subject of our common thoughts. Thou saidst to me one day, that thou wouldst love this book, first, because it had been made in company with thee, and also because it pleased thee. If at times thou fearedst for it the narrow judgments of frivolous

man, thou wast yet persuaded that truly religious spirits would end by liking it. In the midst of these sweet meditations, death struck us both with his wing: the sleep of fever seized us in the same hour: I awoke, alone! Thou sleepest now in the land of Adonis, near to the holy Byblos, and the sacred waters where the women of the ancient mysteries came to mingle their tears. Reveal to me, O good Genius! to me whom thou lovedst, those truths which vanquish Death, rob him of his terrors, cause him to be almost loved."

There is some pretty tenderness in these lines; but surely a great deal of affectation and inconsistency. Where is the Henriette whom he addresses? At the beginning she reposes in the bosom of God; at the end she is sleeping in the land where the Syrian dames, in days of yore, celebrated their mysteries in honour of Venus and Adonis. Are we to understand that M. Rénan looks upon the earth, or the universe, of which this earth is part, as the Deity? Or rather, since it is certain that he holds this opinion, does he intend this passage to be understood as alluding to it? He addresses his sister as a still conscious being; but his first question is surely frivolous, when proposed to a disembodied spirit: he asks does she remember the days when he was composing his *Life of Jesus* by her side, and she said she would always be fond of it! A more fitting inquiry, at such an interview as he imagines, would have been to ask her, *what she thinks of it now* that she has gone through the veil into the Holy of Holies, and sees light in Him who is its source. His last question is more serious, if we could suppose it to be seriously meant: "Reveal to me, thou good Genius, the truths which vanquish Death, rob him of his terrors, cause him to be almost loved!" Does M. Rénan really and truly desire and seek a revelation of this great mystery—for such it is to him? If not, why ask it? If he does, does not his own heart bear witness to man's need of a revelation to inspire such thoughts as he describes? If man requires a revelation to give him light and strength in seasons when the heart most needs them, why does he appeal to his departed Henriette to discover what Jesus, whose Messiahship he rejects, has revealed already, and to do what Jesus the risen Christ has already done? We fear that in the mouth of M. Rénan the solemn interrogation is but a mere figure of rhetoric; if so, it is a tawdry figure: but in the mouth

of a Christian,—a follower of him who has "abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light,"—it would be absurd and preposterous. No Christian could utter such a wish; for he has already, by the grace of God in Christ, the blessing which it implores.

After the dedication, which affords a very fair sample of M. Rénan's style, and an index to his mind, comes an *Introduction* of nearly seventy pages, chiefly employed in discussing the sources of the history which follows. Among these the Four Gospels of course occupy a prominent place. Here, as in other parts of the book, we have a mixture of scepticism which seems to us unwarrantable, of candour such as we cannot but approve, and of inconsistency very strongly marked. It displays great clearness of style; that is, the particular sentences and expressions convey their respective meanings distinctly: but owing to the opposition between some passages not very widely separated, the course of the thought appears at times perplexed. We shall endeavour to unravel the threads of the argument.

Of course, the first point to be determined by M. Rénan, is, how far the data furnished by the Gospels can be employed in a biography prepared in accordance with the sound principles of historical criticism. And here he starts with a sentiment which, in our judgment, betrays the bias of his mind.—"That the Gospels," he says, "are in part legendary, is quite evident, *because they are full of miracles and of the supernatural.*" Certainly, if every story of the miraculous is erroneous, and every narrative of the supernatural is deceptive,—that is to say, *if nothing that is miraculous or supernatural is credible,* —one or other of the following suppositions must be adopted:—Either the books are wilfully false, by whomsoever they may have been written; or supposing them to have been composed by honest men, their authors, if eyewitnesses, must have been mistaken with respect to a vast number of tangible facts which took place under their own observation; they believed occurrences which were in no degree supernatural, to be miraculous; and as such they have recorded them. Or if written at a later date, by authors who did not mean to deceive, they embody the traditionary stories handed down from wilful falsifiers,

or imaginative contemporaries of Christ, probably amplified at every stage by the ardent fancy of marvel-loving minds;—that is to say, they are, in whole or in part, *legendary*. The first of these suppositions M. Rénan explicitly gives up. The second he does not even think worthy of notice. The third is, of course, that which he adopts.

Rénan's fundamental principle, in reference to the Gospels, is that writings which narrate supernatural occurrences must be, at least in part, *legendary*. But he protests that this is no *a priori* assumption; it is an induction from history viewed in its broadest aspect. Let us hear his own words:—

"To try to explain those recitals," (*i.e.* narratives of supernatural events,) "or to reduce them to legends, is not to mutilate facts under the name of history, it is to proceed on the mere observation of facts. None of the miracles with which old histories are filled ever took place under scientific conditions. An observation which has never been refuted tells us that miracles only happen at a time when, and in countries where, they are believed in, and before persons who are disposed to believe in them. No miracle has been wrought before an assemblage of persons capable of ascertaining the miraculous character of a fact. Neither the lower nor the upper ranks of society are fit for that purpose. It requires great precautions and long experience in scientific researches. In our own days have we not seen almost all the higher ranks become the dupes of gross jugglery or childish illusions? Marvellous facts, attested by whole villages, have become, through means of a more strict inquiry, punishable facts. If it is proved that no contemporaneous miracle supports discussion, is it not probable that the miracles of the past, which all have taken place in popular gatherings, would equally present to us their share of illusion, if it were possible for us to criticise them in detail? It is not in the name of this or that philosophy, it is in the name of a constant experience, that we banish miracle from history. We do not say, 'Miracle is impossible:' we say 'there never has been, till this day, a miracle established by proof.'"—Pp. l. li.

Observe, then, the process of reasoning. No miracle has ever been established by proof, therefore the Gospels are in part legendary. This seems to say in other words, if the Gospels be not mere legends, they would establish the reality of miracles; therefore they must be reduced to the rank of mere legends, lest they should afford that very proof the reality of which is denied. Can anything shew more clearly that the author writes under a bias, and labours to maintain a foregone conclusion? With all

deference to Rénan's integrity (for we believe he is unconscious of the position into which he has been entrapped) —we say that to treat the Gospels thus, for the purpose of extracting from them a *Life of Christ* such as he has produced, is not to write a history of facts from evidence, but to manufacture evidence to suit a predetermined state of facts. It is very well for him to assert that his view of the miraculous is not taken up to suit any particular form of philosophy; but knowing, from his other writings, that he is a determined pantheist, we cannot see how any course is open to him but either to treat the Gospels as he has done, in accordance with his philosophy, or to renounce his philosophy itself; which, we are quite sure, he has no thought of doing. As to the inductive argument on which he relies, its fallacy is transparent. What he calls "the observations of facts," is not an observation at all; for that is the testimony of our own senses to which, through them, we have had cognisance: it is a mere inference—a generalization—the *general* truth of which we do not question, but which we cannot apply to the case before us in the form in which it is given by M. Rénan, namely, that "*no miracle* ever took place under scientific conditions," without assuming the very point to be proved. The author agrees that neither persons in humble nor in lofty rank are competent to decide whether a miracle has been wrought under their own eyes. Nobody but a committee of *savants*, chemists, physicians, &c., can determine such a point. We submit that there are some facts of which, if they took place at all, no one could doubt the miraculous nature. Even if it be conceivable that one action or two, bearing a miraculous appearance, had been performed by a lucky concurrence of causes happening at the time, this will not explain the vast multitude and frequent repetition of such actions performed by Christ and his Apostles. Chance does not repeat itself in this way. Renan asserts that no miracles ever were performed except in the presence of persons who believed in them, and who were disposed to believe in them; but with those which are recorded in the Gospels the case was notoriously otherwise. They were performed in the face of hostile crowds, and many of those who witnessed them were induced to

abandon their opposition, to become friends of the Gospel, and for its sake to imperil all that is dear to the heart of man in this life. The Apostle Paul is a notable instance. But we forbear. Our object is not to refute M. Rénan, but to shew what are his leading principles; and we must proceed to another portion of the Introduction, that which relates to the authorship and authority of the Four Gospels.

And here we remark that Rénan puts himself in decided, though respectful, opposition to his predecessor, Strauss. The latter refers the Four Gospels to an obscure and uncertain, but certainly recent date; affirms that they were written by men who knew and could know nothing of the details of the history which they record; and although he is far from denying the existence of the great personage who is the subject of their narratives, he asserts that the speeches put into his mouth are in a great degree imaginary, and that the actions ascribed to him are not to be taken as real events, but as a mere mass of fictions or imaginations, having no firmer foundation than their accordance with the "Messianic idea" which prevailed at the time in Judea. But Rénan cannot bring himself to assent to a criticism so sweeping. He says that "M. Strauss has deceived himself in his theory of the composition of the Gospels;" that "his book has the fault of resting too much on the theological groundwork, and too little on the historical:" and that it is "spoiled in its more comprehensive parts by an exclusive system."—(P. viii.) We have often enunciated the same judgment, and have been well abused by the "men of progress" for doing so: it is something to have got thus far a confirmation of our views from such a writer as Rénan. He even goes so far as to say—"In fine, I admit the four canonical Gospels as authentic. All, in my opinion, ascend as high as the first century," (that is to say, were composed within less than seventy years after the death of Christ); "and they are approximately" (*à peu près*) "the works of the authors to whom they are ascribed."—(P. xxxviii.) This is attributing to them not only a much higher antiquity than Strauss allowed,*

* In his *fourth* edition, Strauss, who had at first included the Gospel of John in his general assertion of the modern date of the historical books of the New Testament, so far modified his theory as to admit that it was probably written in the first century, and possibly by the Apostle John; but in his *fifth* the concession was retracted.

but a much greater historical value; in fact, Strauss allowed to them no weight at all as evidence; Renan concedes to them all the weight that can be desired, so long as their statements coincide with his own pre-conceptions; but when they clash with his views, he rejects them without scruple. This, as we have already intimated, is a convenient arrangement, and saves a great deal of trouble to a writer who wishes to make a history to his own liking!

Let us now consider the opinions of our author respecting the four Evangelic histories, as he states them in detail. He says the names prefixed to them are not given as those of their authors, strictly speaking; the formulas, "according to Matthew," "according to Mark," "according to Luke," "according to John," only indicate that these were the traditions traceable to each of the Evangelists, and which claimed the sanction of their authority. Here we are tempted to make a remark. The word "Gospel," in the New Testament itself, never means a written document; it always signifies a doctrine orally announced,—specifically that of Christ. The object of the Evangelic records is to give an account of that doctrine, and of its promulgation. The writers could not use the common formula in other cases—"The Gospel *of* Matthew," "*of* John," "*of* Luke," &c.—without claiming to be themselves the authors of the doctrine embodied in their books; and the very idea of making such a claim they would have abhorred. The phrase "*according to* Matthew," &c., was to them a matter of necessity, and Rénan does not well to press it into his service as he does. He adds, however, "It is clear that if these titles are correct, the Gospels, without ceasing to be in part legendary, assume a high value, since they bring us to the half-century which immediately followed the death of Jesus, and even in two cases, to the eye-witnesses of his actions."—(P. xvi.) And we add, if so, they render the introduction of a legendary element utterly incredible; for legends such as Rénan supposes to have gathered round the life of Christ, do not, cannot grow up in fifty years.

The third Gospel, he expressly admits, is correctly ascribed to Luke, the author of the Acts, and the companion of St. Paul. The date he assigns is that of a short time

after the siege of Jerusalem. In proof of this last position he cites the 21st chapter of the Gospel; but to us it is clear as the sun at noon that the 21st chapter of Luke must have been written *before* the siege. Had that event already taken place, the historian could scarcely have failed to indicate the accomplishment of our Saviour's prophecy, and the preservation of the Christians through its means. He has done so in a parallel case (Acts xi. 28). However, the date assigned by Rénan refers the Gospel according to Luke to the 42nd or 43rd year after the crucifixion, which does not afford space enough for our Lord to have become a mythical personage. Now Rénan expressly grants to the Gospels by Matthew and Mark an earlier date than that of Luke. "If the Gospel of Luke is dated, those of Matthew and Mark are so also; for *it is certain* that the third Gospel is more recent than the first and second; and presents the character of a much more complete compilation," (pp. xvii., xviii). However, he does not look on Matthew and Mark as the writers of these Gospels in their present form. He builds much on a sentence quoted by Eusebius from Papias, a writer of the first century, who says that Mark wrote a narrative of the "sayings and doings" of Christ, as he had learned them from the lips of the Apostle Peter; and that "Matthew had written *the Oracles* (τὰ λόγια) in the Hebrew tongue, and every one interpreted them as well as he could." The word which we have rendered "Oracles," is the same that occurs in Acts vii. 38, Rom. iii. 2, Heb. v. 12, 1 Pet. iv. 11, in all of which it is so rendered in every version of the New Testament that has come under our notice. The term may be well applied to the Gospel by Matthew, which incorporates a large number of the divine discourses pronounced by our Lord, stating also the circumstances in which they were delivered, and those by which their oracular character was proved. It is true that if Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew, the original work has been lost; but that is of no consequence in a historical point of view, as we have a Greek translation which was accepted as equal to the original at a time when both were in existence, and when numbers of Christians, Jews by birth, but accustomed to speak and write in both languages, were able to verify the version by

comparison with the original. Rénan conceives that the book composed by Matthew was no more than a collection of sentences, to which some other hand has added the narrative portions. But this does not help him much; for the greater part of the recitals in the additions to Matthew's work (if they be additions) are confirmed by Mark and Luke, and in fact are necessary to make sense of the discourses themselves. Strike out the narrative parts, and much of the remainder becomes almost unmeaning. Rénan's admission is worthy of note. "On all hands, it is beyond a doubt that the discourses of Jesus were *very early* (*de très-bonne heure*) put into writing in the Aramean tongue; that at *an early period also* his remarkable actions were written."—(P. xxi.)

Of the Gospel of John he says there are graver doubts. These are built on the silence of Papias, of whose writings, however, only a few fragments remain, so that we cannot tell whether he was really silent or not; and whose silence, such as it is, includes Luke, whose book Renan believes to be genuine. But he admits that from the earliest era of Christian controversy (and assuredly it began very soon) this Gospel was appealed to by both sides; by the Gnostics and their opponents, by Justin Martyr (A.D. 140), by Tatian, by Theophilus of Antioch, by Irenæus, and a host of others by whom its genuineness never was questioned. Now Irenæus was a disciple of Polycarp, who was himself a disciple of St. John; so that it could scarcely be expected that in the circumstances of the time, the authorship of any Christian work should be better attested. Hence Renan ends by ascribing this book to the apostle whose name it bears; but he finds the facts and discourses recorded in it so different from those which we read in the three histories by which it is preceded, that he supposes the venerable man to have composed the addresses which it puts into the mouth of Christ, with a view "to clothe with the authority of Jesus certain doctrines dear to the compiler," which, in his old age, after the overthrow of Jerusalem, he had borrowed from the syncretic philosophy of Asia Minor, in which he resided. "In transferring these new ideas to Jesus, he only followed a very natural inclination!"—(P. xxi.) Is it the natural tendency of old men to imbibe new ideas from

those whom they had all their previous lives been combating? Is it their natural inclination to ascribe these newly-acquired ideas to persons who had never entertained, certainly had never expressed them?

(*To be continued.*)

DR. CARPENTER.

The writer of this sketch remembers to have heard the subject of it preach from the text, Acts xiii. 36—"David, after he had served his own generation, by the will of God fell on sleep." And no words could more graphically or faithfully describe his own character. Lant Carpenter effectively served his "own generation" ere he fell asleep in Jesus, living, acting as ever in the Great Taskmaster's eye. His contemporaries have nearly all quitted this first scene of their existence, and the present generation can have but a very inadequate conception of the extent or value of his labours. It may be permitted to one who enjoyed the inestimable advantages of the Doctor's instructions, and who from early youth was in the number of his catechumens, to pay a very imperfect, yet sincerely grateful tribute to his memory. To him the name of Carpenter is hallowed by a thousand associations. "Guide, philosopher, and friend," how many will rise up to call thee blessed!

Lant Carpenter was born of pious and respectable parents, at Kidderminster, in 1780. They were Dissenters, but of the liberal kind; and whilst they sedulously brought up their children in the fear of God, they ever encouraged free inquiry, urging them to prove all things, to hold fast also that which is good. Lant was the third son of his father's rather numerous family. From a child he was anxious to promote the good of others; and having received a superior schooling to numbers of the youths, his neighbours, he was accustomed, before he had attained his twelfth year, to teach these lads early in the morning before they were called to their daily labour. When seventeen, having been well grounded in school learning, he was sent to Northampton, where he pursued

his studies for the ministry, under the Rev. J. Horsey, a very excellent man as well as tutor. Mr. Horsey was long the respected minister of the Castle-hill Congregation in that town, at one time under the care of the celebrated Dr. Doddridge. The Old Meeting-house still exists; and some twenty years since, the large table-pew in it, in which the students sat, was pointed out to us—"That was Lant Carpenter's usual seat." The academy, however, was broken up not long after Mr. Carpenter entered it. Strange rumours of heresy among the students were prevalent, and his name was mixed up most unjustifiably with these. "He returned," says his affectionate son and biographer, "to Kidderminster, dispirited, and anxious respecting the future." It was determined he should go to the Glasgow University. Whilst there he passed through a dangerous illness, but his life was spared to become a blessing to numbers. During his recovery, and afterwards, he paid the greatest attention to the Christian evidences, and the result was a firm, unwavering conviction of their truth and supreme importance,—that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

Leaving Glasgow, after nearly a three years' residence, Mr. Carpenter resided for a short time in Birmingham, assisting the Rev. J. Corrie in his school, at that time one of the most flourishing in the kingdom. This was in the year 1801. Towards the end of the following year, he became Librarian of the Liverpool Athenæum, remaining about three years in this congenial situation. His residence in Liverpool appears to have been peculiarly pleasant to his feelings. He retained a great fondness for the town to the end of his life. The love of order was conspicuous in Mr. Carpenter, and he carried it into everything with which he was connected. So admirably, as it has been said, were the library volumes under his care arranged, and so thoroughly acquainted was he with them and their respective places on the shelves, that he could find any volume in the dark. At Liverpool, Mr. Carpenter made many most valuable and lasting friendships.

But Mr. Carpenter was now to make a move of a more decided and important character. The Rev. Timothy Kenrick, a man of mark, who had introduced the Unita-

rian doctrine into Exeter, and who was revered by a numerous and enlightened congregation, died suddenly and in the prime of life, whilst on a visit to his friends in Wales. This was in 1805: and being warmly recommended to the George's Meeting Society by the late Mr. Belsham, Mr. Carpenter was chosen as Mr. Kenrick's successor, and colleague with the Rev. James Manning, senior pastor, one of the kindest, most cheerful, and most amiable of men. Some slight theological differences subsisted between Mr. Manning and Mr. Carpenter. The senior minister was what is known as a Semi-Arian, holding the pre-existence of our Lord; his junior colleague was of the more modern school, as his predecessor had been, and maintained our Saviour's simple humanity. They differed also on the extent of future punishment; but such differences never in the smallest degree affected their harmonious action, nor the esteem in which each held the other. Mutually they laboured for the good of their flock, whilst they were each instant in every labour of love that tended to the common weal. There was no preaching against or *at* each other, and they would have most indignantly repelled any attempt at raising a faction in the Society for either. We feel a right thus to speak of these faithful, devoted followers of the Master. The glory of God was their first aim. They loved the name of Jesus, and bowed themselves submissively to his divine authority. Truly may they have said—"Ourselves, your servants for Jesus' sake." Through the long vista of bygone years, we yet see the forms of these pure, single-minded men, each in his turn ascending the pulpit to give utterance to eternal truths, and in a manner rarely equalled, still more rarely excelled. It is often asserted that the Unitarianism of the last generation was coldly critical, and was preached in a manner the least likely to arouse the conscience or foster the better feelings. We believe this to be a most mistaken opinion; but whatever may have been the case elsewhere, the religious services of George's Meeting-house, Exeter, were every way worthy of the name,—they were to the last degree serious and impressive, nor at all wanting in unction. The morality was that of the Gospel, and, as such, of the purest kind. There were most constant and urgent and

pathetic exhortations to walk worthy of the holy vocation with which Christians had been called.

Not long after his settlement in Exeter Mr. Carpenter was united to a lady to whom he had been long tenderly attached, and of whom it is enough to say that she was every way worthy of such a man. He also opened a boarding-school for boys, which was almost immediately filled, and with the sons of persons of the highest respectability. The school enjoyed for many years, under his care, both at Exeter and on his subsequent removal to Bristol, a reputation of no ordinary kind. Soon after this, and on the publication of his excellent work on New Testament Geography, he received, in a manner as gratifying as it had been unsolicited, the degree of LL.D. from his Alma Mater of Glasgow. His congregation regarded the bestowal of the diploma as complimentary to themselves, whilst "the Doctor" was from thenceforth his familiar and affectionate cognomen, and he was rarely mentioned under any other designation. The patronymic was absorbed in the title.

But the Exeter society were to lose their beloved minister and friend, by his removal to Bristol, which took place in 1817. The loss was most sensibly experienced, not only by his flock, but by the inhabitants of Exeter generally, who, for the most part, differing from him doctrinally, respected and loved him as a useful citizen, and for the excellence of his character. The opulent and flourishing Lewin's Mead congregation invited Dr. Carpenter to become co-pastor with their venerable minister, the Rev. John Rowe, a man of great experience in Bristol, and universally esteemed. It is a remarkable fact, that the person—a physician of great eminence (Dr. Stock)—who had taken the most prominent part in the proceedings relative to Dr. Carpenter's removal to Bristol, and who had drawn up the letter of invitation to him, became, soon after, a professor of Orthodoxy. Dr. Stock had, in his communication to Dr. Carpenter, styled Bristol "a hotbed of fanaticism." Into that fanaticism he was now to plunge. His secession from the Unitarian cause was a subject of great triumph at the time, and a letter, well written and most respectfully worded, addressed by him to Mr. Rowe, was eagerly trumpeted forth as heralding

the utter defeat of Socinianism. A temperate reply to it from Dr. Carpenter's pen put an end for ever to the controversy, save that this reply caused a Bristol clergyman to study the Unitarian claims till he became convinced of their justice, and conscientiously resigned his church preferments to join the worshippers of the one God in the Lewin's Mead Chapel.

In Bristol, the sphere of Dr. Carpenter's labours was largely extended; his praise was in all the Churches, and he was everywhere regarded as one of the ablest defenders of Unitarian Christianity. He never wanted either the ability or the will to step forward in defence of principles dearer to him than life, and he was ever ready for the warfare. Yet it may be doubted if he was formed to be a polemic. Controversy with him was a necessity, not a delight, and it never soured his temper, nor betrayed him into the use of sharp language, or engaged him to utter bitter retorts. His controversial works are tolerably numerous, but in not one of them is to be found an uncandid utterance. An Orthodox friend once remarked to us how sweetly-toned the Doctor's writings were. He was much more at home in works of a devotional and practical character, and into these he threw his whole strength. His last great and his favourite work was a Gospel Harmony, a most admirable book of reference, and of which the preliminary dissertations are of great value. We must confess that we prefer the Gospels singly as they stand, to any harmony of them, however ingeniously constructed. The Gospels are the quickening spirit: the Harmony, with its transpositions and technical arrangement, is too much as the letter which kills.

But the treasure was in an earthen vessel, and that, as it would appear, of the most fragile kind. Dr. Carpenter's incessant labours brought on the usual results, in bodily languor and pain. He departed, in 1839, for the Continent, in order to recruit his health and strength. A valued friend accompanied him. It was fondly hoped that the change of scene and abstinence from his accustomed labours were producing the best effects on him. Whilst meditating a return home, he was washed overboard on a dark night, in the Mediterranean, near Naples. For some time he was not missed by the persons on board the steamer. The body was some time afterwards thrown

on shore on the Italian coast, and there being recognized by an English gentleman, was immediately buried. His family saw him no more; but theirs was the consolation, the joy, that where the Master is, there his faithful servant shall be also.

"BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MOURN."

Oh, deem not that earth's crowning bliss
  Is found in joy alone;
For sorrow, bitter though it be,
  Hath blessings all its own;
From lips Divine, like healing balm
  To hearts oppressed and torn,
This heavenly consolation fell—
  "*Blessed are they that mourn!*"

As blossoms, smitten by the rain,
  Their sweetest odours yield—
As where the plowshare deepest strikes,
  Rich harvests crown the field;
So, to the hopes by sorrow crushed,
  A nobler faith succeeds;
And life, by trials furrowed, bears
  The fruit of loving deeds.

Who never mourned hath never known
  What treasures grief reveals—
The sympathies that humanize—
  The tenderness that heals—
The power to look within the veil,
  And learn the heavenly lore—
The key-word to life's mysteries,
  So dark to us before.

How rich and sweet and full of strength
  Our human spirits are,
Baptized into the sanctities
  Of suffering and of prayer!
Supernal wisdom, love Divine,
  Breathed through the lips which said,
"*O blessed are the souls that mourn—*
  They shall be comforted."—W. H. Burleigh.

CONGREGATIONAL MEMOIRS.

No. II.—LARNE AND KILWAUGHTER—(*Continued from p.* 131.)

SHORTLY after the trial of the witches, Mr. Ogilvie died at Ballyloran. On the 13th of September, 1712,* his mortal remains were laid in Larne churchyard, where a handsome marble monument, suitably enclosed, with the arms of Ogilvie engraved at the top, was erected over them some years ago, by his great-grand-daughter, the late Mrs. Major Rowan, formerly Mrs. James Blair, of Merville, near Belfast.† On this monument is the following inscription :—

"Here are deposited the remains of the Rev. WM. OGILVIE, who died in 1712, and JANE AGNEW his wife.

"WILLIAM OGILVIE, who died Feb. 14, 1780, aged 74 years.

"JAMES BLAIR OGILVIE, who died April 22, 1785, aged 48 years.

"ELIZABETH BLAIR, wife of the last-named William Ogilvie, who died May 21, 1785, aged 87 years.

"And MARGARET SHAW, wife by her first marriage to said James Blair Ogilvie, who died March 19, 1818, aged 72 years.

"This monument is erected by Dorothea Shaw Blair, in memory of her beloved parents, MDCCCXX." ‡

* The precise date of Mr. Ogilvie's interment is known from the following circumstance. In 1712, the Old Congregation of Belfast was possessed of palls and mourning cloaks, which, although they were at first doubtless procured for the accommodation of their own members, were yet also hired out amongst the families of the Presbyterian gentry throughout the province, so as to bring in to the Congregation an annual income of upwards of £50. The register in which the account of these mortuary transactions was kept was for a time lost. A few years ago it was in part recovered, and was lately lent to me by my venerated friend and co-presbyter, Rev. W. Bruce of Belfast. It is a most curious document. It includes 24 years, from 1712 to 1736, and contains a list of 2000 funerals, comprising the families of Massereene, Mount Alexander, Castle-Upton, Kilwaughter, and Ballygally, with the names, dates, palls and number of cloaks let out to each, and the prices charged. Amongst the entries I find the following :—"1712. Sept. 13.—Mr. Ogilvie, Minister of Larne—best mort-cloth or pall, 15s.; 18 cloaks, at 3s. each, £2 14s.; total, £3 9s." We shall find that in 1734 a fine mort-cloth was bought by the Larne Session out of the proceeds of a legacy, and also hired out, but I fear not with such profitable results as attended the hiring of the Belfast mort-cloth and cloaks.

† Mrs. Major Rowan's own remains were interred at Ballymoney, in the family burying-ground of her second husband, Major John Rowan, of Mount-Davys and Ahoghill, who was for many years an inhabitant of Larne.

‡ The above inscription will be scarcely intelligible to future generations, owing to the circumstance that the two ladies who are last named in it were twice married, and that in the inscription both of

A curious manuscript history, or record of experiences, written about 50 years ago, by an old inhabitant of Larne

them are designated after their first husbands. The second-named William Ogilvie was the son and namesake of the minister. His wife, whose maiden name was Elizabeth Blair, was the daughter of Major James Blair, the first of that family who settled in this neighbourhood, and who, as an officer in the Irish Protestant army, fought at Derry in 1688-9. Major Blair lived for some time at St. Cunning, in the parish of Carncastle, but afterwards on a property which he purchased in the adjoining Grange of Killyglen, and which was subsequently known as "the Blairmount Estate." To this property considerable additions were made by his son, William Henry Blair; and the residue is now owned by Oliver Bond, Esq., of Londonderry, who inherits through the female line. James Blair Ogilvie, abovenamed, was the son of *Mr.* William Ogilvie, and the grandson of *Rev.* Wm. Ogilvie. He was an officer in the Royal Navy; and his widow, whose maiden name, as above stated, had been Margaret Shaw, and who was a daughter of William Shaw, of Doagh, a connexion of the Ballygally family, enjoyed for some years a pension, which she forfeited on marrying for her second husband John White of Larne, who was the first captain of the Larne Independent Volunteers in 1782. By her first husband (James Blair Ogilvie, R.N.) this lady had no sons, but three daughters, viz.,—1. Elizabeth Ogilvie, who lived in the village of Doagh, near Ballyclare, and died there unmarried several years ago. 2. Dorothea Shaw Ogilvie, who married (*a*) Mr. James Blair of Mervile, and (*b*) Major Rowan, then of Larne, but had no children by either husband. 3. Helen Ogilvie, who married the late Mr Campbell Graham of Belfast, by whom she had a large family, one of whom, I have been glad to hear, is called Mr. Ogilvie Graham By her second husband, Mrs. White (born Ogilvie) had one daughter, who died young and unmarried. From this it will be seen that the family of Ogilvie of Ballyloran, where they resided from 1700 to about 1870, is extinct in the legitimate male line, and that its representatives through the female line must be sought among the descendants of the late Mr. Campbell Graham of Belfast, by his wife Helen Ogilvie.

The corrupted form of the minister's name—Ogilby—which has long been very common in the parish of Kilwaughter, indicates, I believe, a descent, on the part of those who bear it, from the house of Airlie, which is less legitimate than that detailed above, and which the following extract from our congregational records may perhaps explain:—"1730, May 24. There being a motion made to the Session by a member of the Session of Enver (*i.e.*, the new Congregation formed in 1715), viz., James Laird, that this Session should give weekly out of the poors' money 5 pence towards maintaining Mr. W. Ogilvie's bastard, which sum of 5 pence he said their Session paid in like manner; this Session, after some reasoning, agreed to pay 4d. weekly." The foregoing entry is not creditable in any way to the "Mr. William Ogilvie" who is therein mentioned. But who is that gentleman? Certainly *not* the minister, as has been sometimes erroneously stated; for in 1730, the date of the above extract, the minister had been 18 years in his grave. It must have been his son, who was also his namesake, and who, in 1730, would be 24 years of age. In addition to which we are to remember, that the minister died when this son was only six years of age, so that in no view of the matter should the father in this case be made to bear the iniquity of the son.

who is long since dead, has come into my hands. In it the writer refers to the state of matters in Larne during the time of his great-grandfather, and in this connexion, speaks of Mr. Ogilvie in the following terms, which are interesting as shewing the view of that minister's character traditionally preserved for many generations in a family whose representatives, during Mr. Ogilvie's residence in Ballyloran, were his nearest neighbours:—

"When my great-grandfather came to this place, it was his fortune to be settled just neighbour to the clergyman who was minister in Larne—a Mr. Ogilvie—a very godly, good man, with whom he formed a correspondence. Mr. Ogilvie was the minister at Larne, and there was none else but the curate minister of the Church of England. But Mr. Ogilvie was a Presbyterian minister, who preached in the west end of the town, greatly respected and beloved by all who heard him. At his decease, his people differed so in their choice of a new minister, that nigh the one-half of the people went and built a new house for themselves at what is called Larne Bridge, and so it is to be seen at present."

Between the death of Mr. Ogilvie, in September, 1712, and the appointment of his successor, Mr. James Hood, in June, 1715, the pulpit of the Larne and Kilwaughter Congregation was vacant. We may well believe that the greater part of this interregnum was occupied with those squabblings about the choice of a minister, which ended in the disruption of the Congregation. We may also fairly persume that the contention was intensified, if not originated, by that unsettled and stormy condition of matters at this time in the Irish Presbyterian Church, of which we have abundant indications in contemporary documents. Thus Wodrow, writing in March 6, 1713, to "Mr. John M'Bride, minister at Belfast, for present of Glasgow," says, "I fear it's too true that there are Presbyterians in Ireland who won't allow themselves to be of the same principle with the Church of Scotland, in Government. I wish they would coin some other name for themselves, whereby we might be distinguished from them." And in a paper submitted by a Committee to the Irish Synod in 1715, entitled "An Inquiry into the state of religion, the causes of its present decay, with some proposals for reviving it," we read—"from this fountain (*i.e.* the prevalence of schism) have flowed gross fundamental errors in doctrine, as it has been always

observed that schisms have issued in heresies, and they are now become so many and so generally spread among us, that they may be justly accounted a distinct and very great cause of the decay of religion. . . . And as evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, this has been the occasion of abominable heresies, such as the Socinian, and some are arrived even at infidelity and Atheism." (Reid, iii. 189, 190). May I not add that in this case, as well as in "Revivals," history has, in our own day, repeated herself?

IV. James Hood, M.A., the fourth Minister of Larne and Kilwaughter, from June, 1715 to October, 1716.

It will be seen that the ministry of Mr. Hood, who was the choice of the majority of the Congregation,* was

* The minority seceded, and formed themselves into a new Congregation, choosing as their first minister their favourite, though defeated candidate, Mr. Samuel Getty, who was ordained on the 15th of June, 1715, only a few days after Mr. Hood's ordination, which had taken place on the 1st day of the same month. On the front of the meeting-house which was then erected for this new Congregation, was put up, about the year 1844, (the time of the Dissenters' Chapels Bill) a stone which is still to be seen, with the figures "1627" engraved upon it. What these figures were intended to indicate I cannot imagine. They cannot have been designed to notify the date of the erection of the meeting-house on whose front they appear, for every one knows that there was no meeting-house there until 1715, seeing that the Congregation was not established until that year. Probably the date 1627, was meant to have some reference to the settlement in this town of Mr. George Dunbar, who was the first Presbyterian Minister of Larne, and who did arrive here in 1627. But Mr. Dunbar had no connexion of any kind with the meeting-house on which these figures are now conspicuous; and therefore, as in common apprehension, a date inscribed on any building is understood to indicate the period of its erection, I think the figures now objected to, are calculated—I don't say they were intended—to mislead. On one of the side-walls of this same meeting-house there was lately visible another inscription, which was somewhat curious, being nothing else than the representation of a gigantic pair of spectacles, for whose appearance in such a place the following account was given. At the time of "the split," in 1715, when the disappointed admirers of Mr. Getty first spoke of erecting a meeting-house for themselves, the sneering observation of the other party—which I think comprised the richest members of the Old Congregation,—was, "They will have good spectacles who see *that* house built." The house however *was* built, and a pair of spectacles of goodly size, were actually engraved on a stone in the wall, not I suppose, to assist passers by to see the house, but to perpetuate the confutation of the sneer which had disparaged the feasibility of its erection. The rebuke I think was a very fair one, and I am only sorry that it is no longer to be seen. While referring to this Congregation, I cannot deny myself the satisfaction of adding, that at present

very short, lasting only (as stated in the inscription on his tombstone) "one year and about four months." Respecting Mr. Hood, I have nothing to offer, nor am I aware that anything is now known, beyond what is recorded on the tombstone above referred to. I did hear, several years ago, that some of his descendants resided in the neighbourhood of the city of Derry, from which I should be glad to infer that he was a native of that historic county; but I have not been able to realize the truth of the rumour. He seems to have been a young man of very amiable temper; and as his religious views were evidently more liberal than those of the majority of his contemporaries in the Presbyterian Church, it was perhaps well for him that his early death saved him from "the wrath to come." Truly, "whom the gods love, die young." The following is the inscription on Mr. Hood's tombstone, in Larne churchyard :—

"Here lyes the body of the Rev. James Hood, M.A., Minister of the Congregatian of Larne. He was a youth of considerable abilities, which afforded a pleasing prospect of his future services in the Church; a good Preacher; and diligent in his short labours, a faithful friend, cheerful, affable, and of a courteous mind and winning behaviour. He had much at heart the peace of the church; bewailed divisions amongst Protestants, and the intemperate heat of men of all persuasions; and what finished his character was his unaffected piety, for he aimed rather to be than appear religious, and his extensive charity for men of different sentiments from himself, being of catholic principles, and not of a party spirit, confining religion to his own side. He lived just to show himself to the world, and died lamented in the year of his age 30, October 12, A.D. 1716, having laboured in the Gospel in this place one year and about four months. *Renewed* 1858. *Classon Foster, Minister.*"

Mr. Hood's funeral is also recorded in the *Belfast Register*. The mort-cloth and cloaks, with prices charged, were precisely the same as those which had been furnished at the interment of Mr. Ogilvie. Where Mr. Hood lived during his short ministry in Larne, I have never

it comprises some of the best friends and neighbours I have had since I came to Larne. To the propriety of the date inscribed on their meeting-house, I have ventured to object, but with respect to their meeting-house itself, I can say from the heart :—

For friends and neighbours dear
My prayer shall never cease,
Oft as they meet for worship there,
God send his people peace.

heard. His predecessor had shut him out of Ballyloran-house, which ought to have been his residence and that of his successors.

(*To be continued*).

THE BALLYCLARE CASE AND THE *LONDON INQUIRER*.

We have sometimes had occasion to comment on the gross partizanship exhibited by the *London Inquirer* in the "Ballyclare Case." More than once it has closed its columns against farther communications on the subject, and letters written by the friends of the majority have, on that plea, been refused; but whenever one of Mr. Hall's party favours it with a letter, it is without ceremony inserted. When a display was recently made in the Old Meeting-house, in the form of a tea-drinking and of speech-making, on the double occasion of Mr. Hall's marriage and the victory in the law courts, no notice of the proceedings appeared in *The Inquirer*, the Editor evidently thinking—and here he was not wrong—that a report of the remarkable speeches made at the meeting would bring ridicule on his favourite party. Lately it was intimated that an appeal might be made to English friends to aid the majority of the Congregation, who not only have been deprived of their congregational property, but also have incurred heavy law costs; and immediately it opens its columns for a series of letters intended to prejudice the minds of its readers, and embitter them against the party and the cause which it so thoroughly hates. First comes a letter bearing the signature—nothing more—of "John Hall." It purports to give an outline of the circumstances which rendered him an object of hostility, and resulted in the proceedings by which he gained a Meeting-house and lost a Congregation. Going back to the year 1857, he informs us that he incurred the displeasure of certain parties by opposing an education scheme, then by contributing to a testimonial to Mr. Maginnis, and lastly, by voting for the admission of the York Street Congregation into the Presbytery of Antrim. In making these statements, he forgets that the disagreement which resulted in depriving him of his Congregation was a difference between him and his people on important Christian principles, and on the rights of the laity. They bore with his eccentricities and his follies with a patience that was remarkable; and although it is not true, as the letter bearing his name alleges, that "his ministrations were for years satisfactory and successful," yet the Congregation were united; and it was only when, in his preaching, he seemed to them to make light of Christian principles, insolently told them from the pulpit that he would just preach what he liked, and endeavoured to rough-ride Session, Committee, and people, and to set at nought the election of an Elder regularly chosen, that such dissatisfaction was produced, ending in the secession from his ministry of the great body of his hearers.

Next appears a letter from the Rev. Thomas Hunter, of Ringwood, who informs the readers of *The Inquirer*, that "having been mixing freely both with the friends and foes of Mr. Hall at Ballyclare, he is enabled to prove that the division in the Congregation is the result not of a great principle, but of miserable spite;" that "in leaving Mr. Hall, the majority—if majority they be—have gained no enlargement of Congregational liberty, *not one particle;*" "that they will be subject to the control of the Presbytery as formerly, and that their minister will have the same control over their meeting-house, when they build one, that Mr. Hall is charged with exercising so despotically." This is the substance of Mr. Hunter's letter, mixed up, however, with much malevolence—which, we hope, is not always an accompaniment of "advanced thought" and "spiritu*al* sentiment"—and interspersed with an occasional sneer at Presbyterian polity and Regium Donum, which, by the way, comes badly from one who a few years ago courted a Presbyterian Congregation and failed, not because he objected to Presbyterial rule or Royal Bounty, but because the people had not discernment enough to appreciate him. If Mr. Hunter had calmly investigated the case, he would have learned that no spiteful feeling, but the vindication of a most important principle—*even the divine authority of revelation*—produced the disruption at Ballyclare, and that, below all personal contests that appear on the surface, this was the great question which divided the Congregation: and had he taken the trouble of reading the Resolutions adopted in organizing the new Congregation, he would have seen that they declare that "they reserve to themselves and to their successors the right of withdrawing from the Presbytery (Northern), or from any other with which their Congregation may for the time being be connected, and joining any other religious body, or remaining distinct and separate from all ecclesiastical associations whatever, whenever it shall seem to the Congregation, duly convened, proper to do so, with or without the concurrence or sanction of the minister of the Congregation for the time being." This resolution, with the knowledge and approval of which the Northern Presbytery received the Congregation, and the new minister accepted its charge, sufficiently exposes the rash misstatements of Mr. Hunter, and proves that the liberties of the people are greatly enlarged, and that they cannot be again made the victims of clerical tyranny.

The third letter which *The Inquirer* has published, for the purpose of still farther prejudicing the minds of its readers against our friends in Ballyclare, is from the pen of the Rev. D. Maginnis. In the letter signed "John Hall," it had been stated that Dr. Montgomery and Mr. Porter had driven Mr. Maginnis from Belfast. Mr. Porter thought right to contradict this statement, alleging that "his removal was his own free act, for the avowed purpose of bettering his condition and extending the sphere of his labours," and that his removal was celebrated with an ovation. Mr. Maginnis states in so many words that he was "driven" from Belfast; alleges that, to increase his sphere of labours by moving from a town of 150,000 inhabitants to one whose population does

not exceed 12,000, is "absurd;" and he leads us to believe that, for the first two years of his ministry at Stourbridge, his income was less by £150 per annum than it had been in Belfast. In our intercourse with Mr. Maginnis, which was not slight, we always found him honourable and truthful, and we are at a loss to reconcile with a sense of truth the statements he has made. We know that a month or two before he accepted the invitation to Stourbridge, one of his most intimate friends and sympathizers informed us that the contemplated change would, in a money point of view, be a gain to him, and the statement that his income in his new congregation was less by £150 a year than he received in Belfast is supremely absurd, unless it can be shewn that his salary at Stourbridge was, for the first two years of his settlement there, *merely nominal*. So far from his having made a sacrifice in a pecuniary view by his removal, it was matter of congratulation among his friends that he was gaining by the change; and we venture to affirm that, in all the addresses and speeches at the "farewell soiree," no hint was given and no idea entertained of the sacrifice which now, with questionable taste, he parades before the public. That he was driven from Belfast we believe to be a mere fancy of his own; for in the last year or two of his residence there, his position was in every respect better than it had ever been before; and the obstinacy which led him to withhold a confession of his Christian faith, or the honesty which prevented him from professing what he did not believe, while it estranged him from some, made him a *hero* in the estimation of others. It does not follow, as he seems to think, that when he left a populous town for one that is much smaller, he lessened the sphere of his labours; for in Stourbridge, if published reports are not mere "puffs," he has a large congregation, while in Belfast his preaching, however eloquent and intellectual it may have been, seldom attracted to him more than a mere sprinkling of people.

We have noticed these letters most reluctantly, for we earnestly desire to get rid of all personal criticisms, and to fix the attention of our readers only on the great Christian principles which are at stake in our Church controversies; but we felt it necessary to exhibit the *animus* which *The Inquirer*, with the aid of its partizan correspondents, displays. How far its efforts may succeed in preventing our English friends from aiding the Ballyclare people, plunged into difficulties by their endeavours to preserve their Church property, in which they failed, and by their efforts to protect themselves and their children from contact with dangerous principles, in which they have happily succeeded, we cannot tell: but one thing it has demonstrated, that, under the hollow plea of "religious liberty," it seeks to crush every Congregation and individual that will not accept its own licentious principles of ecclesiastical polity.

THE LITIGATION COMMITTEE AT WORK.

[The following interesting piece of intelligence has been communicated to us from a most reliable source, and is a striking evidence of the spirit of the "Litigation Committee," and the mode in which, under the specious plea of guarding a congregation's rights, they aim at spreading discord. Matters have come to a melancholy state in our church, when Mr. James Heron and Mr. James Andrews assume the office of "watchmen in Zion"—guardians of the Christian rights of the people. What will our fellow-Christians of other churches think of us when they learn that such men are recognized by any section of the Non-Subscribing denomination as prominent leaders, and are put forward to dictate what means a Christian people should take to ascertain the qualification of the candidate whom they would select as their pastor?—Ed. Ch. Un.]

When it was known, early in April, that the Rev. W. Napier was likely to receive a call to Ballymoney, Mr. James Heron, Bank Director, and Mr. James Andrews, Solicitor, proceeded to Ballymoney, where they spent the greater part of a day in the house of Mr. Rowan, formerly a member of the Remonstrant Congregation there, but unconnected with it for five years past. While there, they sent to the Secretary of the Congregation, demanding to see the title-deeds of the Congregational property, a demand to which he very properly refused to accede. They then got the sexton to open the meeting-house and grounds, which they minutely inspected, asking many questions as to the property, tenure, &c., and speaking in the most lofty, boastful, and threatening terms to some members of the Congregation whom they chanced to meet, telling them they had come to save them from the tyranny and oppression of the Remonstrant Synod, and threatening them with some terrible legal proceedings, and the loss of their meeting-house and other property, if they permitted the Presbytery to ask a single question of Mr. Napier at the approaching installation.

This was followed up, in a few days, by a document in legal form, signed by, and purporting to be, the "Protest" of Robert Rowan, copies of which were sent to the Moderator and Clerk of Presbytery, and to the Moderator of the Remonstrant Synod. This document threatened with the most grievous pains and penalties the members of Presbytery, and all others concerned, if they *dared* to ask Mr. Napier even a single question at his installation, or *even to ascertain his views, by permitting him to make a statement in his own words!*

Finding these expedients likely to prove an utter failure, it was determined to try what persuasion could accomplish; and accordingly we have been informed that, just before the installation, a letter was received by the Congregation from another member of the "Litigation Committee," offering them the *largest pecuniary*

advantages and support, if they would secede from the Remonstrant Synod and join the Presbytery of Antrim; and, finally, a clerk of Mr. Andrews' was sent down to Ballymoney to note and report the proceedings on the day of the installation.

We are inclined to think that these gentlemen have, in this instance, given themselves a great deal of trouble in vain; and that the united, steady, and upright people of Ballymoney will continue, as they have hitherto shewn themselves to be, unaffected alike by *bribery or intimidation.*

A FACT AND A FICTION.

In a recent number of *The London Inquirer* we find the following editorial paragraph appended to the letter of a correspondent, who urges the English people to show no sympathy with the large majority of the Ballyclare Congregation, recently deprived of their congregational property:—

"In the Belfast *Christian Unitarian* for March, we are told, on authority, that the time has come when Old School and New School must be divided into two separate denominations; and the establishment of the opposition Congregation at Ballyclare is the first fruit of this announcement. Are any of our readers prepared for this distinct issue? If so, we solemnly warn them that the strife we have already had in Ireland is but the beginning of an infinitely larger controversy here. Our friends will of course act as they think right; but we must be permitted to remind them that it will be the worst of all unrealities and insincerities to sympathize with Colenso and Coquerel, and the brave free inquirers of other Churches, and to contribute towards the suppression of freedom of inquiry in our own Church."

This paragraph contains an important *fact* and an ingenious *fiction.* It is a fact that we have recommended an entire separation between "New School" and "Old School" Unitarians. We have, on various occasions, and as opportunity arose, endeavoured to show that their principles are so entirely at variance, that there can be no real harmony and no honest co-operation between them. If diversity of opinion has ever justly led to division,—if Protestants have been justified in seceding from the Church of Rome,—and if Dissenters have been justified in withdrawing from the Church of England,—then the separation we advocate is plainly right; for what greater principle is at issue between Popery and Protestantism, or between Conformity and Dissent, than that which divides the two parties in our Church—the one maintaining the Divine in Christianity, and holding, as a precious truth, the divine mission of the Saviour; and the other distinctly denying those religious principles, or so far undervaluing them as to make them "an open question," so that ministers of our communion may hold or reject them. To *The Inquirer*, and to that portion, the most demonstrative certainly, but perhaps not the most important, of the English Unitarians who sympathize with that journal, such a view may seem narrow and exclusive. Its aim is to make Christian Unitarianism

identical with Free Inquiry, to such an extent that if any, in the investigation of religious subjects, should arrive at the conclusion that the miracles of the New Testament are fables, and that Jesus was nothing more than a good Jew, in some respects wiser than those about him, but not so wise as many enlightened men of modern times, and in no sense fitted to be our Master,—such free inquirers are to be recognized as fellow-believers, and to be received as fellow-labourers in spreading our Unitarian faith. The principles of any denomination or society are those which are held in common by its members. Thus Trinitarians, differing in other matters, agree in holding the doctrine of the Trinity. Total Abstainers, differing widely in their religious views, are united in acting on the principle of abstinence from intoxicating drinks. What are the principles which, according to *The Inquirer* and its party, distinguish the Unitarian denomination?—what but those principles which are held alike by Deists and Christians? The peaceable and the timid have silently permitted the standard of their Christian faith thus to be lowered; and the result at present is, that that Church, which at one time was the most formidable opponent of Deism, has become united with it, and our holy principles are, in the face of the world, dragged through the mire of unbelief.

It is a *fact*, then,—and we thank *The Inquirer* for giving it publicity,—that we desire a total separation between the Old School and the New; but it is a *fiction* to allege that we labour to suppress free inquiry, and withhold our sympathy from Colenso and Coquerel. We are not aware that either of the illustrious clergymen named has rejected the authority of revelation, or denied the special mission and authority of the Lord Jesus. We advocate free inquiry in the widest sense; and to all, let the result of their inquiry be what it may, we would give the largest freedom. We would have the basis of our Church union as wide as possible, but we would have it *Christian;* and if any of those who had hitherto joined with us in Christian labours, should, under the influence of prevailing tendencies in the religious world, arrive at the conclusion that the life of Christ, as recorded by the Evangelists, is fabulous, we could still respect him as a man, and even love him as a friend; but we could not continue to work with him for the spread of the Gospel, nor could he in honesty work with us. Had *The Inquirer*, for Colenso and Coquerel, written Parker and Renan, there would have been some truth in its remarks; but as it is, it is only a cunning trick to help an unworthy object.

INTELLIGENCE.

ANNUAL MEETING OF MANCHESTER DISTRICT SUNDAY-SCHOOL ASSOCIATION.

The nineteenth annual meeting of this Association was held on Good Friday, March 25th, at Mossley. The attendance was unusually large. The Rev. Charles Beard preached from John xix.

31. After the service about 500 persons adjourned to the School-room, in the basement storey of the Church, where a plain dinner was provided. The business meeting was held in the Church at two o'clock, R. D. Darbishire, Esq. in the chair. Mr. Dendy, one of the Secretaries, read the report of the retiring Committee. It referred to the illness of the Rev. R. H. Gibson—the Visitor of the Association's Schools; to *The Sunday-school Penny Magazine*, whose circulation, by recent exertions, had been greatly increased; and to the attendance of teachers and pupils. The number of teachers was 1,570, and of pupils, 9,033. Mr. Gibson read a portion of his report. He regretted that ill health had materially interfered with his last year's labours. After referring to the places visited, addresses, lectures, and sermons delivered, he said that early in the autumn he had instituted a conference of teachers with much success, and proposed to continue it. The demand for more and better class-books was still on the increase. Various resolutions were afterwards passed, one of which conveyed a cordial welcome to the Delegate from the London Sunday-School Association, Mr. J. M. Wade. Mr. Wade, in acknowledging the resolution, took occasion to refer to the labours of Mr. Gibson, and said that they in the South looked with great interest on this experiment of systematic visitation of the schools: it was a plan well calculated to bind the schools together, and keep all working with one common heart and mind. The business of the meeting having terminated, those present adjourned to the school-room for tea, which was served to 700 or 800 persons.

After tea, the spacious Church was crowded in every part. Harold Lees, Esq., took the chair; and interesting remarks bearing on the Sunday-School work were made by the Rev. H. Gibson, who read a report on the condition and requirements of the schools, Revs. T. Jones, J. C. Street, G. Fox, J. P. Hopps, J. Freeston, T. E. Poynting, and Dr. Marcus, and Messrs. Brittain, Dendy, and J. M. Wade. Thanks were voted to the chairman, and the proceedings terminated with the doxology.

BRITISH AND FOREIGN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

The thirty ninth anniversary of this Association was held at Rosslyn Chapel, Hampstead, on May 18th. The Chapel was filled in every part. The introductory services were conducted by the Rev. H. W. Crosskey, of Glasgow, and the Rev. Brook Herford preached from John viii. 32,—"The truth shall make you free." Immediately after the service the business meeting was held, Mr. Alderman J. C. Lawrence in the chair. The Rev. R. B. Aspland read the annual report, which possessed much interest. The relations of the Association with the Unitarians of Transylvania continued to be of an interesting character: and in the expectation of more largely aiding the Transylvanian brethren—the representatives of the most ancient Unitarian Church—it was recommended that a special appeal should be made to the public to supply the necessary funds. In Italy, the Committee reported that they had assisted some disinterested and noble friends of human progress

to publish at Turin, a small but elegant volume descriptive of Channing's Works and religious doctrine. Means had been taken to place a copy of it in every public library in free Italy. Respecting India, they reported the receipt of letters from the Rev. C. H. A. Dall, giving very hopeful descriptions of his work and its success in Calcutta, and asking for renewed help. A favourable account was given of the labours of the Scottish Association, and of the several missionary enterprises in England. Resolutions in reference to the missionary operations of the Society, the Transylvanian Church, the recent proceedings in Paris against the Rev. A. Coquerel, the younger, and other matters were unanimously adopted.

On Thursday, May 19, the social gathering of the body was held in the Crystal Palace. A cold collation was served at four o'clock, in the new first class dining room, at which about 400 ladies and gentlemen were present. The chair was taken by Mr. Alderman Lawrence. Various sentiments were spoken to by Sir John Bowring, Revs. R. B. Aspland, H. W. Crosskey, J. P. Ham, B. Herford, T. Madge, J. P. Hobbs, J. K. Applebee, S. Bache, and others.

UNITARIAN SOCIETY FOR THE DIFFUSSION OF CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

On Sunday, May 8, the Annual Sermons on behalf of this Society were preached by the Rev. John Gordon, of Evesham, Worcestershire—in the forenoon in the First Meeting-house, from Psalm lxxxv. 10; and in the afternoon in the Second Meeting-house, from 2 Cor. x. 7. After each sermon, a collection was taken up in aid of the funds of the Society.

ANNUAL MEETING.

The annual meeting of the members and friends of the Society was held on Monday evening, May 9, in the First Presbyterian Meeting-house,—T. B. Johnson, Esq., in the chair. The Rev. J. S. Porter having commenced the proceedings with prayer, the chairman called on the Rev. C. J. M'Alester, the Secretary of the Society, to read the Report of the Commitee for the past year. It was of a satisfactory character, but we can only make room for the following extract:—

"The Depository continues to be well supplied with volumes calculated to foster a spirit of rational piety, to promote practical goodness, to uphold revealed religion, and to exhibit Christian Unitarianism as being in harmony alike with the clearest deductions of reason and the plainest declarations of Scripture. In the selection of the books which are offered for sale, your Committee have been desirous of introducing as many as possible of a devotional and practical character, bearing in mind that such books are most important in forming the Christian character and helping the Christian life; and they have been at the same time careful to exclude all works of a doctrinal kind which, on the one hand, advocate Trinitarian or Calvinistic views, and on the other hand, such as impugn the authority of the Christian Revelation. To some, this might seem to evince a spirit of bigotry at variance with the principles of free inquiry which

we profess to hold; but it should be remembered that your Society was established as a Unitarian, and at the same time, as a Christian Society, and the dissemination of works opposed to its fundamental principles would be beyond its province.

"Reference was made in the last Annual Report to the small Unitarian Society at Girvan, Ayrshire, and a resolution was passed at the Annual Meeting, expressing sympathy with them in the heavy loss which they had sustained by the death of Mr. Scott, and the desire of this Society to aid them, as far as possible, in maintaining the public worship of one God, the Father, through one Lord, Jesus Christ. Accordingly, early in May, the Secretary of this Society visited Girvan, for the purpose of consulting with the brethren there respecting the probability of their being able to continue religious services. He found that, in consequence of the extreme depression of trade, and the inability of any of the members to conduct the Sunday services, there was no prospect of public worship being resumed for some time. They expressed, however, a determination to retain their house of worship. Your Committee have since been in communication with them, and arrangements have been made to send them an occasional preacher in the course of the summer; while the Scottish Unitarian Society has also interested itself in them, and is likely to afford them similar assistance; and there is some ground to hope that the good seed sown in that district by the Christian labours of the late Matthew Scott may yet result in the spread of Unitarian sentiments, as already it has resulted in the abatement of an intolerant spirit, and the removal, in some degree, of the prejudices once entertained there against those who believe that the Father is 'the only true God.'

"*The Christian Unitarian* continues to be published monthly. It has been previously stated that the funds of the Society have not been employed for its publication; no reference is therefore made to it in the Treasurer's account; but it will be satisfactory to the Society to be informed that it is self-supporting. Such a periodical, desirable at any time, seems to be required in the present state of the Unitarian Church, when the leading journals of the denomination utter so uncertain a sound on the great theme of the Christian Revelation."

M. Andrews, Esq., Treasurer, submitted a statement of accounts.

The Rev. T. Bowring begged to move the adoption of the Report. It was characterized by great clearness, and was calculated to make a favourable impression on the public mind. To adopt the language of the Report itself—the Association with its book department was calculated "to foster a spirit of rational piety, to promote practical goodness, to uphold revealed religion, and to exhibit Christian Unitarianism as being in harmony with the clearest deductions of reason, and the plainest declarations of Scripture." The Committee had been most happy in their choice of books. The companion volume to the former work of Zschokke, which had comforted their beloved Queen in her great sorrow, and was Unitarian throughout, was a most acceptable addition to the catalogue. So was Mr. Orr's recent work on Unitarianism, and so especially was Mr. Bache's volume on the Christian Miracles. He rejoiced at the appearance of this work, so seasonable, and at the same time so convincing. He spoke as an old Unitarian, one who had been cradled in Unitarianism, and to whom its doctrines were dearer than any worldly treasure: but he must call himself a *Christian* Unitarian—nothing less would satisfy him. He must regard the

Miracles as an integral portion of the Christian Evidences, and could not understand the attempt to divorce them from the faith in Christ: the Evangelical records would be to him perfectly unintelligible under any other supposition than their truth. After speaking in commendation of the Tracts issued in the past year, he congratulated the members of the Association on the privilege they had enjoyed the day before in having such an able and uncompromising defender of the truth as Mr. Gordon. He begged to move—"That the Report of the Committee and the Treasurer's Accounts, as now submitted, be received; and that they be printed, together with the Rules of the Society, the list of its Officers, the Catalogue of Books and Tracts on sale at the Depository, the list of subscribers, and the proceedings of the present meeting."

Mr. M'Fadden seconded the resolution, which was unanimously passed.

The Rev. J. S. Porter moved the next resolution:—"That the thanks of the meeting are due, and are hereby returned, to the Rev. John Gordon, for the able, earnest, and truly Christian discourses with which he advocated yesterday the cause of this Society." Mr. Bowring had spoken of Mr. Gordon as a fearless and uncompromising advocate of Christian truth. He had done so with good reason, for Mr. Gordon was a man who had made sacrifices for his opinions. He was not brought up in connexion with Unitarians, and no doubt it had cost him trials, and struggles, before he left the Church in which for many years he had been a distinguished ornament, and took his part with people who then, even more than now, perhaps, were exposed to the odium of the theological world. His discourses of the previous day were characterized by candour, and zeal, and charity to all mankind; and, if any individual did not agree with the conclusion to which the preacher wished to bring his mind, he must have been favourably impressed with the man himself, and with the cause which produced such a man to advocate it in such a way. He was sure that what Mr. Gordon had seen he would fairly report, and would not give his countenance to those who would represent that society as a set of narrow-minded bigots, who had no charity, and were determined to press a creed down the throats of their fellow-Christians.

Mr. W. Spackman seconded the resolution, and fully concurred in all Mr. Porter had said.

Mr. Gordon, in expressing his thanks to the meeting for the kindness with which his services had been acknowledged, said that he rejoiced in the opportunity which had been afforded to him of advocating a cause so important in his view as was that of Unitarian Christianity. He could not conceive of any truth more important than that which related to the person of God and the conditions of the Christian redemption. The proper object of worship, and the real nature of spiritual blessing, must be matters of supreme importance to the whole question of religion. The method of Scripture investigation, with which Unitarianism was connected, was also a method of great importance. This form of Christianity depended upon an entirely free investigation of the Scriptures. It discarded all theories and philosophies with which other systems endeavoured

to reconcile the records of the Christian faith, and sought simply to ascertain, on common principles of interpretation, what the unbiased testimony of those records was. There was a third point, which he regarded as specially proving the importance of Unitarianism. It exhibited Christianity in harmony with nature, both with the nature of man, and the nature of the world in which he is placed. It thus identified our religious interests with all the other interests belonging to us, and made the revealed will of God as broad in its exposition and application as are the universal ways of God. As to what Mr. Porter had said about the favourable report which he might carry home, he wished to say that, though there were undoubtedly differences of opinion between him and the brethren with whom he had come into contact in Ireland, he rejoiced to find that those differences related to matters of Church government, and not to the principles of religious faith. On the latter subject he had found himself at one with his friends, and that not merely because they held the same dogmatic convictions as himself, but because they connected those convictions with the same freedom of thought which he cultivated. The manner in which they regulated their Church intercourse among themselves presented another question which he must leave to their own disposal; but had he not believed, before he came among them, that there was a substantive agreement in the religious principles which both he and they adopted, he would not have been present on this occasion. As it was, he had had his belief on this point fully confirmed by the very pleasant intercourse which had taken place.

Mr. A. O'D. Taylor moved—"That while we admit to the fullest extent the right of every man to judge for himself in religious matters, we believe that the Scriptures distinctly teach the sole Deity of the Father and the divine mission of the Lord Jesus, and that it is our duty explicitly to avow these great principles, carefully to endeavour to form our own Christian character upon them, and to do all in our power to recommend them to our fellow-men."

The Rev. C. J. M'Alester, in seconding the resolution, said that it was right for them to avow distinctly, wherever they had an opportunity, their acknowledgment of the right of every man to judge for himself in religious matters; for they had been most unjustly represented as being bigoted and intolerant. For his own part, he would most jealously guard this right for his fellow-men as well as for himself; and he believed that to treat with unkindness those who held opinions different from his own, whether those opinions involved some other form of Christianity, or a rejection of revealed religion altogether, would be a violation of the spirit of religious liberty which he desired to cherish and exercise. But this admission of the right of every man to judge for himself, does not imply any indifference to those religious views which we ourselves entertain; and in this resolution we declare that to our mind the Scriptures distinctly teach the sole Deity of the Father, and the divine mission of the Lord Jesus; and that it is our duty explicitly to avow these great principles, to form our own Christian character upon them, and to do what we can to recommend them to our fellow-men. After dwelling on the Oneness and Fatherhood of God, he said that the Scriptures, as he read them, distinctly taugh.

the Saviour's divine mission Some, indeed, who claimed the Unitarian name, and were included in the Unitarian denomination, denied or undervalued this doctrine. He had just received that evening a discourse on "Great Men," lately delivered by a Unitarian minister, in which, referring to great men who were not valued or understood in the age in which they lived, he enumerated *Socrates, Christ, and Paul.* Now, he could not think of placing the Saviour thus in the same list and on the same level with the Greek Philosopher and the Christian Apostle. How indignant Paul himself would have felt at such a reference to his Master,—to Him compared with whom he felt himself to be nothing, and whom it was the highest ambition of his Christian life to honour and to proclaim, declaring—"Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Those principles they as Christian Unitarians held, and it was their duty boldly to avow them: they desired to draw from them holy influences to direct their own life, and to nourish and sustain their own souls; and they sought to make them known to their fellow-men; hence the organization of this Society, and the circulation of those books and tracts to which reference has been made in the Report. He would refer, in a sentence or two, to the delicate matter mentioned by Mr. Porter and others. Mr. Porter, in the charity of his heart, seems to suppose that the hostility exhibited to us by some of the English brethren arises from their not understanding our principles. He did not think so; he believed we understood one another well enough, and that the disagreements between us arose from a diversity of principles. So far as he could judge from the leading organ of the English Unitarians,—indeed he might say the two leading organs, —they desired to embrace in the denomination all who rejected Trinitarianism, whether they believed in the Supernatural, or in the divine authority of Revelation. Thus they reduced our religion to mere Deism. To his mind, the only opinions held in common by Unitarians of the present day were opinions held by Deists. With such latitudinarian views he had no sympathy: but better, perhaps, that they should agree to differ, and not farther indulge in unprofitable strife. He rejoiced to know that not only their friend Mr. Gordon, but many others of the English brethren, valued the distinctly Christian principles embodied in the resolution which he had the honour of seconding.

A Committee of sixteen members, with a Treasurer and Secretary, was then balloted for. The Rev. T. Bowring was moved to the second chair, thanks were voted to Mr. Johnson for his kindness in presiding, and the proceedings were closed with prayer.

INSTALLATION AT BALLYMONEY.

The Rev. William Napier, formerly minister of Newtownlimavady, having received and accepted a unanimous invitation from the Congregation of Ballymoney, to become their minister, was installed on Tuesday, May 10th, by the Remonstrant Presbytery of Templepatrick, into the pastoral charge of that Society. A numerous congregation assembled on the occasion.

The Rev. Moore Getty, of Ballycarry, introduced the services, and preached an eloquent and practical discourse from Luke iv. 18. The installation service was conducted by the Rev. John A. Crozier, of Ballymena, who, in commencing, gave a short historical outline of the course pursued by the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster, in relation to the licensing, ordination, and installation of its ministers, and the reasons which led to the adoption of the recent resolutions on the subject by that Body. The congregation and the candidate having then respectively signified their adherence to, and acceptance of the call, the following questions, taken from the Code of Discipline originally adopted by the Remonstrant Synod, were put to the minister-elect :—

"Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

"Do you promise to give yourself, with all the ability with which the Lord shall bless you, and with all the diligence which the importance of your work, and the responsibility of your situation demand, to the work of the ministry amongst this people; to preach with all faithfulness; to administer the ordinances of religion; to visit and catechise the people; to visit, exhort, and pray for the sick and afflicted; and to perform, through divine grace, any other duties which a sense of your responsibility and the situation of the people may require?

"Do you approve of the Presbyterian Church government and discipline; and do you promise to adhere to the same, and support it to the best of your power and abilities?

"Do you promise, as far as in you lies, to fulfil the appointments of the Presbytery in the Lord?"

Mr. Napier having given affirmative replies to these questions, and the members of Presbytery having individually signified their satisfaction, he was further asked if he desired, for his own satisfaction, or that of the people, to make any additional statement of his views. In reply, he submitted a very clear and comprehensive outline of his doctrinal opinions, after which he was set apart by prayer in the usual manner; and having received "the right hand of fellowship" from his brethren of the Presbytery, the proceedings were concluded by the Rev. Robert Campbell, of Templepatrick, who gave a highly instructive and impressive charge to the minister and people.

The minister and Presbytery were afterwards entertained by the congregation in the Commercial Hotel, where a large party sat down to an excellent dinner on the occasion. The proceedings of the entire day were characterized by the utmost unanimity, harmony, and good feeling.

BELFAST DOMESTIC MISSION, STANHOPE STREET.

The new and commodious building in connexion with the above-named Institution was opened for public worship on the evening of Sunday, May 15th. It was crowded to excess, forms being placed in the aisle and vestibule, and many persons were unable to find accommodation. The services were conducted by the Rev.

John Scott Porter, who introduced them by a solemn and most appropriate prayer and reading of the Sacred Scriptures, and then delivered a powerful, and, at the same time, very touching discourse, founded on Gen. xxvii. 17—"This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." It was listened to with the deepest attention, and must have left the best impression on the minds and hearts of the hearers. The choir of the First House, Rosemary Street, most kindly volunteered their services on the occasion, and Miss Julia Bowring presided at the harmonium. The room, which is neatly fitted up with benches of a substantial kind, will comfortably seat about 120 persons, but very many more were present at the opening. The pulpit, which stands slightly elevated at the top of the room, has a handsome appearance, and the whole is in excellent keeping with the design of the building itself,—to gather therein the poor, the sorrowing, the penitent, the humble seekers for grace and mercy, that within its walls all may find rest and comfort to their souls.

OBITUARY.

Died, at Ballyclare, on May 23, William Simpson, Esq., Solicitor, aged 33 years.

Died, at Belfast, on May 26, Jane, relict of the late James Greenfield, aged 71 years.

Died, on April 30th, at his residence, Hill-head, Ballymena, William Gihon, Esq., J.P., aged 94 years. The good and Christian man whose death, at so advanced an age, we are called on to record, was born at Ballymena, in the year 1770. Early directing his attention to the linen business, then in its infancy in the North of Ireland, his great natural intelligence, and the energy and perseverance which he brought to bear on every subject to which he gave his attention, combined to place him, at a comparatively early period of his life, in a prominent and influential position among the merchants of this province. In the political questions which, towards the end of the past century, agitated the country, he took the liberal side, and although through life he was pre-eminently a peaceful and loyal man, he always cherished his early affection for the liberal cause, rejoicing in the progress of free institutions, and in the increased happiness of his fellow-men. For many years he held the responsible office of Agent of the Ballymena Estate, to the mutual avantage of landlord and tenants: and, on his retirement from that position, the tenants presented him with a Testimonial, in which they justly described him as their "friend and benefactor." For upwards of thirty years he held the Commission of the Peace, and proved himself a painstaking and efficient magistrate, holding the balance of justice with a dignified, impartial, and *lenient* hand. In the year 1844, Mr. Gihon was among the most prominent of those who, cherishing liberal opinions in religion, strongly disapproved of the proceedings on the part of the Calvinistic Presby-

terians, which aimed at the spoliation of the church property of their Unitarian brethren, and which were only frustrated by the Dissenters' Chapels Act. He soon after withdrew from the communion of the General Assembly, and, joined by the late excellent Dr. Patrick and other influential persons, organized the Remonstrant Congregation of Ballymena, of which he continued to be an honoured Elder and a liberal supporter till his death. The last days of our aged friend were darkened by affliction, but his religious affections, carefully cherished through a long life, were only thus more fully developed, and the truths and promises of the Gospel sustained and cherished his soul with hopes full of immortality.

Died, at his residence, Comber, County Down, on March 13, John Andrews, Esq., J.P., aged 72 years. We cannot be satisfied with simply recording the death of one who for so many years occupied a most important position in society, and lived in the esteem and confidence of the whole community. Mr. Andrews was emphatically "a good man and a just." As a merchant, he was distinguished by promptitude, industry, and the most unbending integrity; as a magistrate, by his decision of character, wisdom, and strict impartiality; and as an agent of one of the most extensive estates in the county, by his anxiety to promote the interests not only of the landlord but also of the tenantry. He gave much attention to the science of agriculture, as well as to its practical operations; and he laboured indefatigably to instruct the people in the management of their farms, while he generously aided them to carry out the improvements he recommended. Endowed with a vigorous and active mind, which he had carefully cultivated, he was not less remarkable for humility of disposition, simplicity of manners, and kindness of heart. He entertained liberal views in theology, and in circumstances that might have tempted many to conceal their sentiments, and profess a more popular faith, he never shrunk from avowing and maintaining his opinions; while he uniformly respected the convictions of others, no matter how widely they differed from him. He took a prominent part in the formation of the Remonstrant Congregation of Comber; and we remember him stating, on the last public occasion on which we met him, that in uniting with others to form a new religious society, he was not actuated by any hostility towards his neighbours of other Churches, but simply by a desire that he and others might be enabled to worship God in the way most consistent with their views of Divine truth. While the removal of Mr. Andrews has left an irreparable void in the home of which he was the loved and honoured head, and in the large circle of his kindred and friends, it has deprived the community of one of its most useful members, and his death is justly deplored as a public loss.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Communications for the Editor to be addressed by post to Rev. C. J. M'Alester, Holywood; or, otherwise, to 45, Arthur Street, Belfast.

THE

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RÉNAN'S LIFE OF JESUS.

(*Continued from p.* 155.)

THE great question of the superhuman character and authority of Christ,—his *divinity*, as we may term it, with reference to the mission which he claimed,—relates but to the solution or explanation of an undeniable fact,—namely, the existence of Christianity in the world. That it exists, that it has long existed, that it has inspired in thousands of breasts a hearty faith, that it has prompted to glorious deeds, that it has consoled and strengthened millions of human spirits tried by suffering and tempted by passion, that it has wrought mighty changes in the outward form and internal frame-work of society,—are facts which no one thinks of disputing. How did this mighty doctrine originate? This is a question which presents itself to every thinking mind. The Gospels offer to us a solution which no one can deny to be sufficient to explain the phenomenon;—that it is the message of God to the human race, conveyed through the lips of Jesus of Nazareth, his Son, Mediator, and Ambassador; confirmed by his miracles and those of his disciples; and established by his resurrection from the tomb. We do not affirm that none have denied the *truth* of this solution: but we believe no one has ever disputed its *sufficiency*, if its truth be first evinced. Of those who reject its truth, some have gone so far as to deny that there ever was such a person as Jesus Christ: others have recognized his existence, but declared that we neither know nor can know anything certain or definite respecting his life, character, and teaching. Rénan perceives that this last supposition practically ignores Christ; and that the attempt to con-

struct Christianity without a Christ at its head,—real or supposed,—must always be a failure. He therefore undertakes the task of weeding out from the Gospels the mythical or legendary element which he supposes to have intruded into the biography of the remarkable person to whom the world is so deeply indebted; to gather up the fragments of true history which he believes to be imbedded in the mass; and to present Jesus to the world, as he actually existed, lived, and taught, apart from the fabulous narratives with which his name has been so long connected. Let us see how he succeeds in this undertaking.

He is fully aware of the importance of his subject. He admits, at the outset, that the propagation of Christianity is "the capital event in the history of the world." "The origin of the revolution which is under consideration, is a fact which took place under the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius. Then lived a superior person, who, by his daring originality, *(par son initiative hardie,)* and by the love which he was enabled to inspire, created the object and fixed the starting-point of the future faith of humanity." (P. 1.) This, of course, was Jesus of Nazareth.

"He was born at the Galilean town whose name has become immortally associated with his own." This, of course, implies the rejection of the stories related about his birth in the introductory chapters of Matthew and Luke; but we need not dwell on this; others have rejected them before M. Rénan; but he is the first, so far as we are aware, who has attached any very great importance to the place of the Saviour's nativity in reference to the character which he manifested, and the influence which he exercised in after life and throughout succeeding ages. M. Rénan manifestly conceives that it would have been almost, if not quite impossible, for Jesus to have become the important person that he was, if he had been born at any other spot than Nazareth of Galilee. He enlarges on the beauty of its situation, the fertility of its fields, the richness of its valleys, the magnificence of the surrounding scenery, the loveliness of its women, with the ardour of a poet describing what he had beheld with the eye of a painter: and he declares that this scenery "at once smiling and majestic, was all the education of Jesus." It was to it that his mind owed those lofty qualities, and the

Gospel those persuasive charms which have attracted the admiration of saints and sages. (P. 64–8.) It is curious how the writer forgets that thousands of men were born, lived, and died in the neighbourhood of these fair and bright landscapes: but *only one* has written his name on the pages of the world's history!

The youthful Jesus, he tells us, learned to read and write: (John viii. 6,) but probably did not understand very well the Hebrew Scriptures in their original language. Of this the proof offered is the occurrence of an Aramean word in our Lord's exclamation on the cross; shewing, as Renan conceives, that he cited the Psalms in a Syro-Chaldaic version. But the existence of such a version, at that early date, is destitute of proof: our Lord may well have expressed the sentiment of the Psalmist in the language which rose most spontaneously to his lips; his frequent references to the Scriptures of the Old Testament prove him to have been familiar with their contents, and therefore able to read them in the original;—and lastly, our Saviour actually read the Haphtarah, or lesson for the day, in the synagogue at Capernaum, on his return from the baptism in Jordan. We mention this point chiefly to illustrate the peculiarity of M. Rénan's method, which leads him to adopt and build an argument upon any fact, however trivial, which he finds in the Gospels and thinks suitable to his purpose; while he at once throws aside the facts most earnestly and distinctly asserted which militate against his own theory, though found in the same writings; and this without giving any reason beyond his own dogmatic conviction, why the one should be taken and the other left.

He conceives that our Lord did not know the Greek language, which was probably the case; and that "neither directly nor indirectly had any element of Hellenic culture reached him." (P. 34.)

"Even in the bosom of Judaism, he remained a stranger to many efforts, of which several were parallel to his own. On one hand, the ascetism of the Essenians and Therapeutæ; on the other, the fine attempts after a religious philosophy made by the Jewish school of Alexandria, and of which Philo, his contemporary, was the able exponent, were unknown to him. The frequent resemblances that are found between him and Philo,—those admirable precepts of love to God, of charity, of trust in God, which establish as it were

an echo between the Gospel and the writings of the illustrious thinker of Alexandria,—proceed from the common tendencies which the wants of the age impressed on all elevated minds." (Pp. 34, 35.)

Happily, he was unacquainted with the fantastical scholasticism which was taught at Jerusalem, and which soon afterwards gave rise to the Talmud. Pharisæism was unknown to him: and when he afterwards encountered it, it only inspired him with disgust. But Rénan thinks that some of the principles of the Jewish school of Hillel may have penetrated to Galilee, and may have had some influence in forming his mind. Here we see the effect of a philosophical theory in setting aside the laws of evidence. The doctrines of Hillel he assumes as accurately determined, though we know nothing of them except from writings, the earliest of which was composed two centuries after his death:—the occurrences of the life of Christ, even some which are not miraculous, are regarded as quite uncertain, though written and accepted as historical within a few years after the crucifixion. But M. Rénan states it was the reading of the Old Testament which, more than any other system of instruction, contributed to make Jesus what he was. In it, and in the prevailing mode of interpreting its contents, he found those ideas of the Messianic æra, the kingdom of God, the coming and functions of the Son of Man, which filled so large a space in his thoughts in after times, and which have so mightily influenced the fates of the world. Thus trained, the peculiarities of his mind early developed themselves.

"Early did his exceptional character (*son caractère à part*) reveal itself. Legend loves to display him, whilst yet a child, as revolting against paternal authority, and leaving the common paths to follow his vocation. It is certain, at least, that the relations of kindred were of little consequence in his eyes. His family seem not to have liked him; and on some occasions he is found acting harshly towards them. Jesus, like all men exclusively occupied with an idea, laid little stress on the ties of blood. The bond of the idea is the only one which such natures recognize. 'Behold my mother and my brethren,' he said, stretching forth his hand toward his disciples: 'he that doeth the will of my Father, he is my brother and my sister.' The simple-minded people did not understand him thus: and one day a woman passing near him exclaimed, as we are told (*dit-on*), 'Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps that thou hast sucked!' But he replied, 'Still more blessed is he that hears the Word of God and puts it in practice!' Soon, in his bold revolt against nature, he was to go farther still; and we

shall see him trampling under foot all that belongs to man—blood, love, patriotism; keeping soul and heart only for the idea which presented itself to him as the absolute form of the good and the true." (Pp. 42, 43.)

In this passage we have a specimen of the characteristic inconsistency of M. Rénan's work. If the account of the visit of the youthful Jesus to Jerusalem, and his disputation with the doctors is, as he calls it, "*a legend*," why is it appealed to as furnishing a trait in the character of Christ, except because it is one which M. Rénan imagines he can set in an invidious light? If the exclamation of the woman rests on such doubtful authority that it is needful to introduce it with the formula, "*dit-on*, it is said," why is our Saviour's answer, *which must be equally uncertain*, adduced for the purpose of fixing upon him that "revolt against the feelings of nature," which Rénan asserts is implied in it? If the facts are true, why call them into doubt? If they are false or even doubtful, why rest on them as grounds of an imputation? Moreover, does not every candid reader of the New Testament who examines the passsges alluded to, at once perceive that M. Rénan perverts their whole scope and significance? If any writer in defence of Christianity were to deal with its records after this fashion, what an outcry would be raised, and *in that case*, with justice, by the "men of progress!" But although there are hundreds of examples of a similar treatment of the sacred books, scattered throughout this volume, we are not aware that any of "our foremost thinkers" has uttered a syllable of censure, or even of complaint!

It is not easy to make out, from M. Rénan's account of the early life of Christ, at what time the latter became possessed with the idea that he had a divine call to a special work, for which he was distinctly set apart. But he affirms that it took possession of his mind at an early period. Even during his residence at Cana,—where our author, without any authority whatever, supposes him to have spent the whole of his youth and early manhood,—he felt this conviction. But there was nothing extraordinary in this persuasion; it is one which is common to many souls. Neither was the mission which he believed to have been conferred upon him of a theological kind.

"God conceived of immediately as a Father: such is the whole theology of Jesus. And this was not with him a theoretical principle, a doctrine more or less proved, and which he wished to inculcate upon others. He entered into no argument with his disciples; he required of them no effort of attention. He did not preach his opinions; he preached himself. Often do the greatest and most disinterested minds present, combined with much loftiness, this characteristic of perpetual attention to themselves, and of extreme personal susceptibility, which is in general the peculiarity of women. Their persuasion that God is in them, and that he occupies himself with them perpetually, is so strong that they are not afraid to impose themselves as a law on others (*de s'imposer aux autres*)· our reserve, our respect for the opinion of others, which is a part of our powerlessness, cannot belong to them. This exalted personal feeling is not selfishness; for such men, possessed with their idea, yield up their life with pleasure to seal their work; it is the identification of self with the object which it has embraced, pushed to its extreme verge. In the eyes of those who can only see in the new phenomenon the personal fancy of the founder, this is pride; to those who look to the result, it is the finger of God. The madman and the man inspired here walk side by side; only the madman never succeeds. It has never hitherto been permitted to mental aberration to influence seriously the march of humanity." (Pp. 76, 77.)

This is manifestly but a delicate way of insinuating that our Lord was the victim of an enthusiastic delusion, for of course every one is aware that such self-deceptions as are here described, are the portion not of the strongest, loftiest, and greatest minds, but of the weakest and the worst balanced. The same idea runs throughout the entire volume. Every where Jesus is represented as transmuting his own fancies into the breathings of the Holy Spirit of God; and as partaking of that moral obliquity which is frequently found united with such enthusiastic dreams.

Already, according to Rénan, the sublime lessons of self-denying and self-sacrificing love, of perfect devotion to God and absolute reliance upon him, of contempt for this world, and disregard of mere external sanctity, which are unfolded in the Sermon on the Mount, had impressed themselves on the soul of Jesus, and had often found utterance from his tongue. He had not yet formed a school, or a sect, but he had, by the attractive graces of his character and the persuasive charms of his eloquence, drawn to himself a circle of friends and admirers who flocked around him to listen to those discourses which

unfolded truths so solemn in language so beautiful and so interesting. It is true, the Scriptures say nothing of our Saviour as a religious teacher till after the divine call at the baptism;—but with Rénan that call is simply a legendary tale, and he feels himself at perfect liberty to arrange the facts of the history according to his own idea of their fitness; that is, *their fitness to his own idea.* Not only then does he make Jesus a public teacher at this period of his life, but a better, purer, holier, teacher than he was in after times, when contact with the world of men had, in some degree, dimmed the brightness of his view, and leavened the purity of his motives.

"The day when the young carpenter of Nazareth began to proclaim these maxims, for the most part already spread abroad, but which, thanks to him, were to regenerate the world, was not an epoch (*un événement*): there was one rabbi more, doubtless the most charming of all, and around him some young people, eager to hear him, and seeking the unknown. The inattention of men requires time to be overcome. There were as yet no Christians; nevertheless true Christianity was already founded, and beyond a doubt it never was more perfect than at this first moment. Jesus will never add to it anything durable. What do I say? *In one sense he will compromise it;* for every idea, to be successful, has need of sacrifices: *no one comes forth unsullied from the struggle of life.* To form a conception of what is good is not enough: it must be made successful among men. *For this purpose means less pure are necessary.* Assuredly, if the Gospel had been limited to a few chapters of Matthew and Luke, it would be more perfect, and would not lend a handle to so many objections; *but without miracles, would it have converted the world?* If Jesus had died at the moment at which we are arrived, there would not have appeared in his life such or such a page which shocks us. *But though greater in the sight of God, he would have remained unknown to men:* he would have been lost in the crowd of great but unknown souls; of all souls the best." (Pp. 91, 92.)

The whole of the remainder of the volume seems to us but a systematic unfolding of the fundamental idea here expressed; explaining how and through what process the soul of Jesus, originally so pure and lofty, gradually accommodated itself to the sad conditions of success with frail and weak humanity; how, though still preserving, as M. Rénan admits, the holiness of its aims and ends, it learned to stoop to the employment of means which, at first the simple dictates of good sense, soon degenerated into worldly wisdom; then to artifice; then to the tacit

sanction of delusions which, in the heated imagination of some enthusiastic disciple, began to cluster round his name; then to the baseness of first countenancing, and finally of practising arts which cannot be described otherwise than as pious frauds. We shall see in what sense he employs the expression which we have taken the liberty of printing in Italics, "*Without miracles would the Gospel have converted the world?*" To our minds, this question intimates a weighty argument and a solemn truth; namely, that the Gospel was originally attended by miracles, and could not have made its way without them; but as it presents itself to the thought of M. Rénan, it only suggests the necessity under which the founder of Christianity felt himself of having recourse to the arts of a juggler and a charlatan. It is true, he never applies these epithets to our Saviour, but he ascribes to him artifices of which these terms are the appropriate symbols. He approaches the "Son of Man" with respectful mien and reverent act; but his kiss is the kiss of a traitor.

It was apparently (so Rénan thinks) with a view to conciliate the popular mind, that our Lord, "with his little school." repaired from Galilee to Judea and accepted baptism from John. The two teachers had much in common, and vied with each other in reciprocal courtesies. Their intercourse left its impression on our Lord's mind, and modified his course, at least for a time.

"It seems, in fact, that notwithstanding his profound originality, Jesus was, for some weeks at least, the imitator of John. His path was as yet obscure before him. Moreover, at all times Jesus yielded much to opinion, and adopted many things which were not in his own direction, or which he regarded as of little consequence, for the sole reason that they were popular: but these accessories never injured his principal thought, and were always subordinate to it. Baptism had been brought by John into very great favour; he thought himself obliged to do as the Baptist had done: he baptized, and his disciples did so too. Doubtless they accompanied baptism with preachings analogous to those of John. The Jordan thus became covered in all directions with baptists, whose discourses had more or less success. The disciple soon equalled the master, and his baptism was much sought after. On this point there was some jealousy among the disciples; those of John complained to him of the increasing success of the young Galilean, whose baptism they thought would soon supplant his own. But the two masters remained superior to these weaknesses. Besides,

the superiority of John was too incontestable for Jesus, who as yet was but little known, to think of disputing it. He was desirous merely of growing up under his shadow; and thought himself obliged, in order to gain the multitude, to employ the outward means which had procured for John such an astonishing success." (Pp. 107, 108.)

But Rénan thinks that the influence of John was disadvantageous rather than otherwise to the mind of Jesus. It might have happened that if John had remained at liberty, our Lord would still have ranked himself among his disciples, and in that case his name would have remained unknown. But the imprisonment and death of the Baptist left Jesus at liberty to follow the direction of his own thoughts, which always carried him towards a religion entirely divested of external rites. All that he really owed to John were a few lessons in the art of preaching and popular action. From that moment he preached with more force, and fixed his own ideas on the multitude with authority. We readily concede thus much to Rénan, seeing that it was not till after his intercourse with the Baptist that Jesus preached at all.

The principal subject of his preaching was "the kingdom of God," an expression familiar to the Jews, but to which he gave a moral, not a political, significance. It was, however, as he conceived it, a kingdom upon this earth, though not of this world. Its coming was to effect a sudden revolution. The first were to be last, and the last first: yet its growth was to be gradual. He never dreamed for a moment of substituting himself for the rich and the powerful, whose empire was to come to an end. His object was to annihilate riches and power, not to seize upon them. He predicted to his disciples persecution and punishments, but never once did the thought of armed resistance present itself. Still his kingdom of God was to be a kingdom of the poor, the down-trodden, and the oppressed; and this Gospel, "good tidings" for the poor, preached to the poor and oppressed of his countrymen, arrested their attention, enlisted their feelings, and tended to swell the crowds which pressed forward to hear his discourses and imbibe his views.

In this respect Jesus was faithfully shadowing forth the image of his own thought. He preached the king-

dom of God in the same sense in which he conceived it. But Rénan declares that he was not superior to the use of more vulgar arts for gaining influence. He calls them, to be sure, "innocent arts"; but the arts which he describes are not innocent. For example:—

"Sometimes Jesus employed an innocent artifice, such as Joan of Arc also used. He pretended to know something secret concerning a person over whom he wished to gain an influence, or else he recalled to him some circumstance dear to his heart. It is thus that he reached the heart of Peter, of Nathaniel, of the Samaritan woman. Concealing the true source of his strength, namely, his superiority to those by whom he was surrounded, he allowed them to believe, in order to satisfy the ideas of the time,—ideas, moreover, which he completely shared,—that a revelation from on high revealed to him all secrets, and opened to him all hearts. All thought that he lived in a sphere superior to that of humanity," &c., &c. (P. 162.)

From the same desire of gaining an influence over minds prepared, in some degree, to embrace the profession of his doctrines, he encouraged the advances of women and children, whose susceptible minds he wished to enlist on his side.

"Mothers presented to him their babes that he might touch them. Women came to pour ointment on his head and perfumes on his feet. His disciples sometimes repulsed them as troublesome; but Jesus, who loved old usages, and all that manifested simplicity of heart, repaired the wrong done to them by his too zealous friends. He protected those who wished to do him honour. Therefore women and children adored him. The reproach of estranging from their families those delicate beings, always ready to be beguiled, *(prompts à être séduits)*, was one of those which his enemies launched against him most frequently." (Pp. 190, 191.)

We are sorry to be obliged to characterize this latter statement as a gross and wicked falsehood, for which no authority is quoted by Rénan but "the Gospel" of Marcion: that heresiarch introduced this scandalous insinuation into the Gospel by Luke; which, in other respects, he mutilated and corrupted; and the same authorities which tell us of this interpolation, tell us, at the same time, that its spuriousness was manifested by *its absence from all the manuscripts of St. Luke.* M. Rénan ought to be ashamed of producing such an easily-refuted calumny.

(To be concluded in our next number.)

THE GIANT'S CAUSEWAY.

[Written after a visit in the month of April.]

Oh, no! though years may fleet away,
They cannot need one fond endeavour
To keep within our hearts for ever
The glorious memories of to-day!

The giant columns round us rose,
Like warrior-bands the sea-coast lining;
Some 'gainst the mountain sides reclining,
Wearied with waiting for their foes;

While others met in stern affray,
The champions of the watery world,
And the strong billows backward hurled,
Shivering their proud crests into spray.

From crimson-tinted cliffs we heard
The wild hawk's startling, rapid screams,
While each one of the sun's bright beams
Grew brighter on some ocean-bird,

That, like a snow-flake in the air,
Lay floating, or upon the ocean
Uprose and fell in slumbrous motion,
Hushed by the sea-breeze sighing there.

Dark caverns grimly o'er us bent,
Haunted with melancholy tones
That sadly swept like suppliant moans
From spirits in the darkness pent;

And made us happier when we knew
The sun once more was round us beaming—
Over the heathery hill-tops gleaming
From out a heaven of tender blue.

Oh, wondrous scenes! oh, cherished spot!
These hearts can ne'er forget our meeting;
So long as they on earth are beating,
We feel ye cannot be forgot.

Oh, no! though years may fade away,
We shall not need one fond endeavour
To keep within our hearts for ever
The treasured memories of to-day!

T.

DOMESTIC MISSIONS AND THE "THEOLOGICAL REVIEW."

An article on Domestic Missions in the new number of the "Theological Review" has attracted great and justly-deserved notice. It is marked by singular ability, and well nigh exhausts the subject. We owe the writer many thanks for thus calling public attention to the operations of the system, and for the liberal and kindly spirit in which he approaches a consideration of the whole matter. He is evidently well acquainted with the workings of Domestic Missions as they exist amongst ourselves; yet his remarks shew more of the earnest, anxious looker-on, than of the actual labourer in the field; he manifests a better acquaintance with the theory and the literature, so to speak, of the institution, than with the practical matters connected with it. Yet he speaks so candidly, and with so much of friendliness throughout, that we feel truly grateful even for the strictures he sometimes passes on what has hitherto been done; he has a lenient eye for our short-comings, whilst he offers several valuable suggestions for the future. Yet we imagine that a few of his positions are open to exception, and that one especially, which speaks of these Missions as hardly answering "to the expectations which were at first entertained of their utility." We regret that a remark such as this was penned. It may go far to create the very dissatisfaction that is expressed. We can only reply in the words of an oracle, that "fallible beings will fail somewhere," that human institutions must partake of the imperfections of their founders. Mistakes have doubtless been made, errors in judgment committed. Early zeal has cooled down. A scheme, also, most admirable in itself, may have lost something of its efficiency from defects in its agency, possibly through the agents employed. Still we imagine a too desponding view is taken of the

operations of the Mission considered as a whole. We cannot but acknowledge that all has not been done that was expected by its early and sanguine projectors would have, by this time, been done. But from the first we believe that too much was expected. The Saviour's beautiful simile is, "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear"; and he reminds us that the seed springs and grows up we know not how. But the early friends of the Missionary enterprise appeared to expect—some we *know* did—that the good fruit should almost at once be perfected; ere the seed was well covered up in the ground, the full corn in the ear was to be produced. We remember a gentleman expressing the keenest dissappointment, after three or four years' operation of a Mission in a large town, that so little of good was visible; he could not deny that there had been honest hearty co-operation, that most zealous efforts had been made and were yet making, but he still saw ignorance, beggary, drunkenness, and he feared that money and time were wasted in attempts at reformation. Now, the complaint that institutions fail of effecting that for which they are designed, is a very common one. The Church itself, we are at times gravely, and at times sarcastically, told is a failure. Who cares for the pulpit? its functions have ceased. The Sunday School has been pronounced over and over again a failure, and that from the high places of orthodoxy. Still it is the great company of preachers that upholds truth and righteousness; still the Sunday School numbers its millions of pupils. We rest in all these matters too much on an arm of flesh, we rely too exclusively on our machinery; we sometimes forget that it is the Lord who must build and watch the city, that we are only very humble labourers together with him.

But we are told that "other Churches, though employing inferior agents, have, as a rule, been far more prosperous than ourselves in the same field of labour," and reference is made to the "Ebenezers and Bethels, the Tabernacles and Zions, in the obscurest districts of our towns." Now, before we are put on the inquiry, why this is so? why does a fish weigh more in water than in air? let us ask if it really *be* so. Does the fish weigh

more in one element than the other? Is it the fact that these Ebenezers gather more within their folds than do our Mission Chapels! These orthodox places are seldom Mission Chapels, properly speaking. They have not been built for avowedly the same purposes, but for other classes of persons than the poor. As such, we have known a Unitarian Domestic Mission Chapel well filled Sunday after Sunday, and, at the same time, an orthodox place in juxta-position so scantily attended that it was given up, and we have authority for saying, that some rooms opened for prayer meetings by the orthodox, have very few persons, indeed, attending them. We are too ready to take it for granted that every so-called orthodox building is filled to overflowing: the very reverse is frequently the fact.

We fully agree in the remarks on the influence of the religious principle on the population, and the great need there is for religion, simply in itself considered, to be brought before the poor and ignorant. Long experience would have taught us, if we had not known it beforehand, that Christ's Holy Gospel is the only regenerator; that all other agencies of reformation, excellent as many of them may be, are palliatives merely, not cures, whilst, if put instead of the Gospel, they are useless or worse. The religion of Jesus Christ is the sole hope and stay of the afflicted, of those who, forsaken of the world, pant as the hart for the water-brooks. It is when deep is calling unto deep in the soul, that its wants and weaknesses are felt, and its need of support from a higher than any human power. We believe the work of the Missionary is not to be the dispensing of temporal aid, nor to enforce the sanitary or the educational movement, but he is to be the preacher of righteousness, thus seeking, and causing to be sought, the kingdom of God; then the good things of temperance and health and instruction will be added,—will follow as matters of course. He must beseech men, by the mercies of God, to come, that they and theirs may find a great salvation. We cannot, however, coincide in the somewhat wholesale denunciation of gifts to the poor. We well and most painfully know the evils that result from indiscriminate almsgiving: we dread making pensioners of our hearers or of those whom

we visit. Still there is much distress in the world; the comfortably-off little know how the comfortless live; and if we would do good to the soul, we must look a little after the body, or we may leave the world worse than we found it. The Master fed the hungry multitude with reference only to their pressing bodily necessities. Dorcas made clothes for the poor, and perhaps had many an unworthy recipient. It is not good for us to shut up our bowels of compassion: we must run the risk of being imposed on rather than be too scrupulous in giving. Dickens puts a remark in the mouth of one of his characters which has always struck us as being much to the purpose, "Whether that species of benevolence, which is so very cautious and long-sighted, that it is seldom exercised at all, lest its owner should be imposed upon, and so wounded in his self-love, be real charity or a worldly counterfeit, I leave to wiser heads than mine to determine." We know—all our dear brethren engaged in the work know—that give we must, that the appeal is too urgent to be resisted. Tuckerman, from the very beginning, had his poor's purse; how could he have gone on without it?

And we must be allowed to take exception to the slighting manner in which the system of visiting is spoken of. We had all along thought that this from house to house visitation, or something akin to it, was the great object of the Mission, else why the prefix *Domestic*? True it may be, that too much is made of visiting, and there is danger of its degenerating into the call of mere civility; but for this there is no necessity, and it should be guarded against: yet the civil call is not to be despised: it is the touch of nature making the world akin. Life is made up of small matters, and a small thing becomes great under certain circumstances. The poor love to be noticed; they think much of the kind word, the sympathizing look, the genial smile, the hearty shake of the hand. The father likes to answer questions as to his family and their prospects; the mother is delighted that the children are noticed; the children look with fondness on him who comes to see them at their homes; and we are persuaded that the familiar call, though the conversation may not always partake of reli-

gion, rivets closely the bonds of affection between the flock and the shepherd, thus bringing them indirectly, but very surely, under the best influences.

The Domestic Mission is not, then, a failure: in no instance has a Mission been given up where it has been begun. In all it has prospered, though under many discouragements and difficulties, and in many cases far beyond what could have been reasonably expected. Let us be told of our faults, and let us have grace to amend them; but let us work together harmoniously, cheerfully, courageously. Still may it be said, the harvest truly is great, and the labourers but few; yet these few must have their hands strengthened that they faint not nor be disheartened. B.

CONGREGATIONAL MEMOIRS.

No. II.—LARNE AND KILWAUGHTER—(*Continued from p.* 166).

V. Josias Clugston, fifth Minister of Larne and Kilwaughter, from 1717 to 1775—fifty-eight years; with Robert Sinclair as Assistant for the last twenty years of his incumbency.

Respecting the antecedents of Mr. Clugston, previously to his settlement in Larne, I have not been able to ascertain anything further than that he came from the town of Antrim, where there still are persons of the same name, if not of the same family, as my predecessor. Neither can I give any account of Mr. Clugston's ordination, beyond its date, seeing that the minutes of the "Antrim meeting," by whom he was ordained, are lost for the years between 1691 and 1726, nor is there any congregational record to supply the deficiency.

The Larne Session Books, between 1701 and 1721, are not now to be found, for a reason stated in the following minute, with which the Session Book of the latter year begins:—

"Feb. 23, 1721.—Mr. Robert Robinson gave up the clerkship of the Session, and the Session put John Ffinley in his room. Mr. Robinson's minutes are not to be found."

On the first page of this Session Book is given a list of the names of the Larne Session, from 1721 to 1769;

with remarks by the Session-clerk opposite to most of the names, and all the names except four erased, indicating their death, desertion, or expulsion, as follows:—

"The Names of the Session.—Mr. Josias Clugston, *Minister*.

"James Callwell (erased), died 1726; Robert White (erased), deceased; Robert Neilson (erased); William Murray (erased), died Feb. 27, 1739; Robert Kerr (erased), deceased July, 1733; James Glasgow (erased), deceased 1726; John Torbert (erased), removed to Carrickfergus and died there; Jown Slowan (erased), deceased; Samuel Mairns (erased), deserted; Brice Blair (erased), deserted; John Craford (erased), died Dec. 4, 1737; John Moor (erased), demitted; James Ramsay (erased), dead; Thomas Neilson (not erased); John M'Brown (erased); Alex. Miller, Elder (erased), dead; Robert White (erased), deceased Dec., 1727; Capt. Patrick Agnew (erased), deceased; William Neilson (not erased); Abram Callwell (erased), removed; Robert Glasgow (erased), turned out; Samuel Stewart (erased), dead; Robert Workman (erased), deceased June 17, 1755; Thos. Ffinley (erased), dead; Ephraim Ferguson (erased), dead; Hugh Glasgow (erased), dead July 8, 1767; Thomas Burns (not erased); Robert M'Brown (erased); Alex. Miller, younger (not erased); John Ffinley, Session Clerk (gave up that office Nov. 1, 1769, as also that of an Elder. None of the constituted Elders remain but three)." *

"March 26, 1721.—Public intimation was given to the Congregation that Mr. Patrick Agnew, James Ramsay, and Thomas Neilson were to be taken into the Session to be members thereof.

"April 7.—The aforesaid appeared in the Session, but for some reasons which Mr. Agnew offered, their being constituted at that time was delayed.

"April 30.—James Ramsay and Thomas Neilson were constituted Elders.

"June 20.—Mr. Patrick Agnew was constituted Elder, and appointed to go to the General Synod, to meet in Belfast the 20th instant. He did go."

The following entries refer to encroachments which were made at this time, by the newly-established Congre-

* Of the thirty-one names given in the above list, thirteen have disappeared entirely from our neighbourhood. Mr. Samuel Mairns, who is set down as one of two deserters, was connected with the family of the Wilsons, who were the maternal ancestors of the late Mr. P. Agnew of Larne; as both the names, Mairns and Wilson, occur on the tombstone in Mr. Agnew's burying-ground in Larne Churchyard. Another member of the same family, Mr. Robert Mairns, left a legacy of Five Pounds to the Congregation in 1734, which was invested in a mort-cloth; but the name is not now known amongst us. The desertion of Messrs. Mairns and Blair will be explained by subsequent entries in 1722; and the fact of Mr. Robert Glasgow being "turned out," by a minute of May 17, 1747.

gation of "Enver," upon the Old Congregation from which it had seceded; and also to some feeling of disaffection towards Mr. Clugston on the part of his own Congregation, the particulars of which I cannot now ascertain, nor state whether they were doctrinal or personal:—

"JAN. 10, 1722.—Captain Agnew appointed a Commissioner to the Presbytery at Belfast, with a supplication to have bounds set for our Congregation, by reason of Enver's encroaching still upon us. He did go, but it had no effect. [*Note.*—Both Congregations belonged to the same Presbytery.]

FEB. 7, 1722.—Sederunt, Minister and Elders. After prayer, it was moved to think on some proper method to keep the Congregation together, which at that time were disaffected to their minister, and joining with Enver Congregation. They appointed the 9th instant to meet on that affair. Concluded with prayer.

"FEB. 9, 1722.—None of the Session met but four, and took only under their consideration the affair of the Congregation leaving Mr. Clugston and joining Mr. Getty of Enver, who with his Session received all persons that pleased to join them without certificates; and finding their Congregation would by that means be broken, resolved to have a supplication drawn up and sent to their Presbytery, setting forth at large their grievances; which supplication was drawn up and laid before the Session, who approved the same, and appointed Commissioners to prefer it to the Presbytery. It had little effect. The same practice as aforesaid by the Congregation of Enver.

"APRIL 13, 1722.—Captain Agnew and John Finlay were commissionated to appear at the Presbytery to meet in Glenarm, and lay our grievances before them, occasioned by Enver's daily encroachments. The Presbytery appointed their next meeting to be in Larne, where they would inquire into the affair.

"JUNE 3, 1722.—The Presbytery met at Larne. Brice Blair attended as Elder. The Commissioners were Captain Agnew, James Glasgow, John Torbet, James Boyd, John M'Brown, and John Finlay; yet the Presbytery did no more in the affair than only desire the Congregation of Enver to receive no more of ours until bounds should be set.

"JULY 1, 1722.—The Session considering the Congregation still continuing disaffected, moved that Mr. Clugston should hold a public conference with the Congregation the 5th instant, which he did, and the Congregation seemed to be generally satisfied. Concluded with prayer."

The method of reconciliation which was here adopted, must have been somewhat humiliating to the minister; but it seems to have been effectual, for we hear no more about "disaffection" between him and his people; and to this day the memory of Mr. Clugston is traditionally

cherished in this neighbourhood, as that of a faithful minister and singularly charitable man. The two Congregations, also, seem soon to have got upon more neighbourly terms with each other. In 1733, a member of the new Congregation left a small legacy to the poor of the old one; and in the following year the old Congregation returned the compliment by hiring out the parish mor-cloth to members of the new Congregation at a reduced price compared with strangers. But "the bounds" of the two Congregations have never yet been "set," and they are now so inextricably mixed together that it would be utterly impossible to lay off a march-ditch between them.

In 1724, took place the Synodical trial for heresy of Mr. Nevin of Downpatrick. On this occasion, the name of Mr. Clugston appears in the account of the trial, as voting and protesting against Mr. Nevin's exclusion from Synod. But I do not find on the same list the name of any Elder whom I can venture to claim as representing the laity of Larne and Kilwaughter. On the 15th June, John M'Brown had been appointed by the Larne Session to attend the General Synod at Dungannon, but his name does not appear in the account of Mr. Nevin's trial. An Elder called "Pat. Getty," is recorded as voting and protesting against Mr. Nevin's exclusion. The name Getty might seem to indicate Larne, where the Getty family have long been much respected, but I dare not claim the bearer of it, on this occasion, as a member of our Congregation; for I believe that since "the split" in 1716, the name of Getty has never appeared on our books. The "Pat. Getty" of 1724, must have represented either the new Congregation of "Enver," or one of the two Belfast Congregations. Rev. Samuel Getty, the first minister of the new Congregation, had died on the 28th February, 1724, as recorded in the Belfast Funeral Register.

Shortly after Nevin's trial took place the expulsion of the Non-Subscribers from the General Synod, and the formation of the Presbytery of Antrim in 1726. At this trying juncture, Mr. Clugston cast in his lot among the Non-Subscribers, and was one of the original members of the Antrim Presbytery. Dr. Armstrong (in his appendix

to Martineau's Ordination Service), even represents Mr. Clugston as having been the Clerk of the new Presbytery, but on what authority he does so, he does not state, nor have I been able to discover.* Indeed I do not find that Mr. Clugston was much distinguished in public matters, or that he took any leading part in the discussions of that most interesting period. He seems to have been a man of a peculiarly mild and gentle temper, who, whilst he firmly maintained his Christian freedom, was chiefly devoted to the unobtrusive discharge of the Christian duties. Tradition states that in 1726, Mr. Clugston was accompanied to the Synod at Dungannon, and supported there, by Captain Patrick Agnew of Kilwaughter, as his Elder. This tradition I am very willing to believe, but I am not able to substantiate. In the "Narrative of the Seven General Synods" names are scrupulously omitted, and I have no access to the original Synodical Records of the year, which alone could decide the point. In the meantime I must, in candour, but with a feeling almost of actual pain, express my present suspicion (different from my former apprehension), that Captain Patrick Agnew was not at Dungannon in 1726, as Elder from Larne, or in any other capacity. In the first place, there is no entry in our Session Book of any elder having been appointed to attend Synod in that year. In the next place, I find in the Belfast Register of Funerals, under date December, 1724, the particulars of the funeral of "Mr. Agnew of Kilwaughter, near Larne." This, I think, must have been Captain Patrick Agnew, for in 1729, the Squire of Kilwaughter is called, in our Session Book, "Mr. William Agnew," so that if any member of the Agnew family accompanied and supported Mr. Clugston at Dungannon, in 1726, it must have been this latter gentleman—who is still known in the parish as "the Old Squire." This *may* have been the case, and I am exceedingly willing to believe that it *was* the case.

* I venture to note another inaccuracy into which Dr. Armstrong has fallen in the admirable historical appendix above referred to. He inserts amongst the original members of the Antrim Presbytery in 1726, the name of Rev. Joseph Osborne of Newtownlimavady (my father's immediate predecessor) who was not ordained in Newtownlimavady until 1742.

The following entry in our old Session Book appears curious when read in the present day.

"JAN. 22, 1729.—Agreed that nothing should be called in the meeting-house that is lost but books."

In these days, Larne does not seem to have had a town-crier, to announce the loss of ladies' keys or boas. The clerk of the meeting-house was therefore apparently required to do duty for that purpose. But the privilege appears to have been abused, and the Larne Session, with a literary taste which does them infinite honour, determined that their Precentor should in future "call nothing that was lost, but books." In our own days, clerks and even ministers have not always been so fastidious in this matter. I have heard of a Presbyterian Congregation being bidden from the pulpit to a Landlord's dinner, and even to a Landlord's barn-dance.

"JUNE 15, 1729.—The Session being fully met, with the concurrence of the minister and Mr. William Agnew, agreed that the stipends should be received monthly, viz., the first Sabbath of every month, at the doors of the meeting-house, and to begin said collecting the first Sabbath of July next."

This may remind some of my older readers of a custom which formerly prevailed in country Presbyterian Congregations; and according to which the Elders, on communion Sundays, sat at one of the doors of the meeting-house, *all the other doors being locked*, to receive stipend from every seatholder as he went into the house of God. I am not sure that this custom much increased the amount of stipend received. I am sure that it often diminished the number of attendants on the Lord's Table. I think that even in one of our town Congregations I have seen the tables of the money-changers set out in the vestibule of the temple, and gentlemen sitting thereat in the receipt of custom. But I believe such a thing is unknown at present in any of our Congregations.

(*To be continued.*)

HALF-HOURS WITH A SUNDAY-SCHOOL CLASS.

CHRIST GIVES SIGHT TO A BLIND MAN.

The narrative of the event which is the subject of our present lesson is found in John ix. 1—31. The scene is in Jerusalem, at the Feast of Tabernacles. The celebration of this feast occupied eight days: it was towards the middle of the week when our Lord reached the city, and during the last two or three days he attracted much attention, not only by his teaching, but also by the exercise of his miraculous power. In the passage containing the lesson various terms require explanation; and in every lesson it is the first business of the teacher to see that every word is distinctly understood by his pupils, else they will fail to derive the instruction which it is intended to convey. "Siloam" was a fountain at the foot of Mount Zion, and therefore very convenient to the Temple. Its water was remarkable for its purity, and, possibly from its proximity to the Sacred Mount, was considered by many to possess a healing property. On the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles the worshippers proceeded from the city to this fountain, and drawing water from it, carried it to the temple; and having drunk a portion, poured out the remainder at the altar of burnt-offering, singing at the same time in loud chorus, "With joy shall ye draw water from the wells of salvation." Probably it was while this ceremony proceeded that our Lord, on this occasion, uttered those sublime words—"If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." "Pharisees" is a word of constant occurrence in the Gospels, and the class should be made familiar with the characteristics of this sect, and also of that of the Sadducees. Pharisee is derived from a Hebrew word signifying "separated," and this sect kept themselves separate from the mass of the people, fancying that they enjoyed the special favour of heaven, making a great parade of piety, and regarding with mingled scorn and pity all who were not of their company. The Sadducees were rather a philosophical sect, named from their founder, Sadok; they were few in number, and known more by what they denied than what they believed. Both these sects are not without their

representatives in the Christian Church at the present time. The "Sabbath" of the Jews was kept with the utmost rigour, and death was the penalty of violating the laws by which it was guarded. Children should be led carefully to distinguish between the "first day of the week," with its blessed associations of rest and worship, and the seventh-day "Sabbath" of the Jews: and they should be taught that they are no more bound by the commandments of the Jewish law respecting the Sabbath, than by those which prohibit particular meats. The Christian's law is not the Old Covenant, but the New. "Miracles" are often referred to in the Gospel narrative, and denote not simply what is wonderful, but what is above the natural powers of man; and therefore their performance is presented by the Saviour, and understood by his disciples, as a convincing evidence of his divine mission. "Prophet" we have already explained to signify one empowered to teach, and thus possessing a knowledge which enabled him, to a greater or less extent, to foretel events that would occur. "Synagogues" were places of worship, and the service in them consisted in prayer, the reading of the Scriptures, and their exposition. There were many synagogues in Jerusalem and through Palestine; and wherever the Jews resided they erected one or more. The name of "Moses" occurring in the lesson, it will be a useful and interesting exercise for the children to trace out the leading events in the life of this prophet, and to point out his connexion with "the Law." The only term which remains to be explained is "worship;" and much care should be taken to show the class that while this term, in our own time, is restricted to the homage we offer to God, it was used frequently in England, at the period when our present translation was made, to express sentiments of respect and reverence for human beings. In this sense we find it employed in our version of the Scriptures, as in Matt. xviii. 21, where a servant is represented as falling down and worshipping his master; and in the marriage service in the Book of Common Prayer, the term is employed by the bridegroom to his bride, while the title, "Worship," still applied to magistrates, is a remnant of the once common use of the word, and evidence enough that in reading our translation of the Scriptures

we are not to understand it as necessarily signifying "divine homage."

The teacher may now sketch the scene which is the subject of the lesson; but the question of the disciples—"Who did sin—this man or his parents—that he was born blind," requires explanation. The sin of his parents might, we can suppose, be the cause of his being born blind, but how could his own sin be the means of causing blindness from birth? The difficulty is at once removed by informing the class, that the Jews, like some other nations, believed in a transmigration of souls, thinking that the spirit which first animated one body, at its dissolution passed into another.

While our Lord was in the courts of the Temple, at the Feast of Tabernacles, he saw a man who had been blind from his birth. The attention of the disciples was drawn to his unhappy condition. The Master, remarking that he "must work the works of him that sent him," and that while he was in the world, "he was the light of the world," went up to the man, covered his eyes with clay, and told him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam: and presently he returned seeing. This miracle, performed so publicly and while many worshippers were in the Temple courts, excited much attention and was subjected to severe scrutiny. The man who had been made to see, and who was known to all as having sat from day to day on the wayside begging, was brought to the Pharisees. When they heard from his own lips a plain narrative of the facts, they were perplexed, and determined with themselves that whether a miracle had been performed or not, Jesus was a sinner, for he had done the work on the Sabbath-day. Some of them, however, reasonably asked, "How could a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" Anxiously turning again to the man himself, they inquired what he thought, and he candidly confessed that he believed him to be a prophet. His parents were then sent for and interrogated; they stated that the man was their son, that he had been born blind, and that he now saw, but how he saw, they did not venture to say, lest, if they ascribed it to miraculous power on the part of Jesus, they should be "put out of the synagogue," or, in other words, excommunicated. Again they question the man

himself, but he declined to repeat what he had already so plainly and fully told them: and then they reviled him, saying, "Thou art his disciple, but we are Moses' disciples." The man retorted on them with a boldness which nothing but his faith in the power of Jesus, and gratitude to him, could have inspired. "Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing." They answered him in a way which has often since been adopted when argument has failed—they excommunicated him. Jesus afterwards met the man, and revealed himself to him as the Christ, and the man devoutly expressed his belief in him, and "worshipped" him. How eagerly we desire to know the subsequent history of that man! Did he continue to believe, and for his faith bear meekly the reproach and contempt of his neighbours; and in his master's cause did he labour, and seek to bring many to that blessed one, who had been to him "the true light?" To such inquiries neither the Gospel nor tradition gives us any answer. The doctrines inculcated in the passage are easily perceived.

1. We are taught that Jesus is "the light of the world;" and in the miracle he performed we may sée, as in a figure, the effect of his Gospel, which enables us to discern spiritual things. How many, enlightened by Christ's word, have been led gratefully to confess, in reply to those who would fill their mind with doubt and unbelief—"One thing we know, that whereas we were blind, now we see."

2. This miracle, like others, is a proof that God sent his Son. So the miracles are represented by our Lord, and so they are regarded by his disciples. Again and again Christ appeals to them, and they seem to have been a great means of establishing the faith of his followers. Some profess a belief in Christ, and yet disbelieve his miracles. In all consistency, such persons should modify their profession of faith by saying—We believe in the goodness and wisdom of Jesus, but we disbelieve the Gospel narratives.

3. Jesus declares to the man to whom he gave sight that he is the Son of God; and a comparison of this

passage with others has led to the opinion that the expressions "Son of God" and "Christ" are employed in the same sense, and both indicate the divine mission of our Lord.

The duties of working while it is day, of believing in Christ, and of honouring and serving him, are also plainly deduced from this interesting passage; in a few simple sentences they may be pressed on the attention of the pupils, and may, under God's blessing, help to render them faithful and practical disciples.

A Sunday-School Teacher.

HOW TO MAKE A CONGREGATION DECLINE.

Absent yourselves from the public ordinances whenever you take a notion. Others will learn from your example that they need not be very conscientious about attending on the worship of their Maker.

Be sure not to venture out to church if the day be a little cold or cloudy. This will teach others that if they would take care of their health they will stay at home.

Talk in discouraging terms about the prospects of the congregation. This will make people keep a good distance; for no person wishes to connect himself with a sinking cause.

That you may be able to talk thus, take little or no interest in the welfare of the congregation yourself. You have then only to suppose that your brethren are as cold and languid as yourself; and that religion is indeed in a very low state.

Take care that your meeting-house be moderately cold and uncomfortable. This will keep you from being crowded out of your seats by strangers; for none will attend but those who have something of the spirit of martyrdom.

Place your meeting-house at the outskirts of the neighbourhood, and let it be accessible only through much mud. Why, if people love the ordinances, this will not keep them away.

When you are asked for a small contribution to put your meeting-house in as decent repair as you keep your own private dwelling, be sure to complain that you have always to be giving money. If you are a poor man, with nothing but a few thousands at interest, it would be unreasonable to expect you to do much. Let others see to it.

Take care to sing the praises of God as if you did not care whether you sung or not; and let your church music be such as to disgust all persons of taste.—*The Christian Freeman.*

PRESBYTERIAN WIDOWS' FUND ASSOCIATION.

We have before us the printed proceedings of the late annual meeting of the Presbyterian Widows' Fund Association. We need hardly inform our readers that this is a Society incorporated by Act of Parliament, and intended to aid the widows and orphans of ministers connected with the Synod of Ulster, the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster, and the Presbytery of Antrim. It is optional with the members of these bodies, at their ordination, to become contributors to this Society or not; but it affords an easy mode of securing a provision for a minister's family in the event of his death. It is, in short, a kind of Insurance Company connected with these bodies; it is managed by a Board of Directors, chosen from the contributors, and its proceedings are uniformly characterized by a spirit of justice, and mutual confidence and respect. In consequence of the recent disruption of the Presbytery of Antrim, a difficulty arose respecting the Northern Presbytery of Antrim, whose members might, in consequence of its separation from the parent body, be excluded from the benefits which the Widows' Fund Association affords; but a measure was devised, under advice of experienced counsel, by which it was believed that the difficulty would be removed, and the ministers from time to time of the Northern Presbytery might be admitted as contributors to the Fund. This measure was embodied in a motion, of which, agreeably to the Rules of the Association, the Rev. John Meneely, of Ballymacarrett, gave notice at the annual meeting held in March, 1863; and at the late meeting, with a few introductory remarks, he moved it as follows:—

"That, as several Ministers in connexion with the Presbytery of Antrim, being Members of this Association, have lately formed themselves into a separate Presbytery, called the 'Northern Presbytery of Antrim,' all present and future ministers of the said Presbytery, called the Northern Presbytery of Antrim, shall be entitled to become Members of the Association, and enjoy all the rights and privileges of such members (of the Association) in the same manner and as fully as if they were Ministers in connexion with the Presbytery of Antrim, and that the expression the 'Presbytery of Antrim' in the Act of Incorporation, and in the Bye-laws, shall be considered as including the 'Northern Presbytery of Antrim.'"

This motion was seconded by the Rev. Dr. Cooke, whereupon the Rev. John Porter moved an amendment in the following words:—

"That an opinion be obtained from the Law Officers of the Crown, in order to ascertain whether this Association, having regard to the Act of Incorporation, is competent to pass the proposed resolution."

Several ministers of the General Synod spoke warmly in support of the original motion, and the Rev. S. C. Nelson as strongly in favour of the amendment. At length the chairman put the amendment to the meeting, and there were but three to vote for it,—the Revs. John Porter, S. C. Nelson, and Hugh Moore. The original motion was then put, and, in a large meeting, was carried by the

votes of all present, except the three gentlemen just named. On the matter being thus decided, Mr. Porter drew from his pocket a written paper, which turned out to be a Protest, previously prepared, and begged on his own part, and that of any who might join him, to have it entered on the Minutes. He signed it himself, and he was immediately followed by his two co-presbyters. Here it is, as it appears in the Minutes of the annual meeting.

"PROTEST.

"In order to guard against any consequences that may arise from the rejection of the amendment, prejudicial to ourselves or others interested in the Fund, we hereby protest against the resolution now carried, and request to have our protest entered on the Minutes.

(Signed) "JOHN PORTER.
"SAMUEL C. NELSON.
"HUGH MOORE."

Although Mr. Porter, in resisting Mr. Meneely's motion, expressed his desire that the Northern Presbytery should be admitted, if they were sure that its admission would be legal, yet, remembering that a lawyer most familiar with the constitution and proceedings of the Fund had drawn out the motion, and considering that no injury could arise from the recognition of the Northern Presbytery, and farther bearing in mind that the body which comprises the vast majority of the contributors made no objection, but on the contrary was most willing to recognize it, it was more than bad taste in the three reverend protesters so pertinaciously to object. It is true that the members of the Northern Presbytery contended for an important principle, and rather than abandon it, withdrew from their brethren: but those brethren should therefore have honoured them for their consistency, and not have sought by such dogged opposition to deprive their body of the advantages of the Widows' Fund Association. Liberal the Presbytery of Antrim may be, in a sense; but such a proceeding as we have noticed was not, as we believe, prompted by any liberal feeling, but by a spirit of ungenerous hostility.

A QUESTION NOT ANSWERED.

A CORRESPONDENT writing lately to *The London Inquirer*, in reference to an error in the report of the annual meeting of the Belfast Unitarian Society for the Diffusion of Christian Knowledge, adds—

"You have placed our Unitarian Society under obligations by the lengthened extracts you have given from the Annual Report, and by the outlines you have published of the several speeches: thus your readers may understand pretty plainly what our principles are. But you will materially add to these obligations by stating, so far as you apprehend them, what are the essential principles of Unitarianism, as distinguished from mere Deism."

By a mutilating process, familiar to the editor of *The Inquirer*, but, so far as we are aware, unknown to impartial journalists, the

passage which we have quoted, and other sentences in the letter referred to, were coolly *burked*, and the fragment published as the entire letter, not even an asterisk being introduced to indicate the editorial license that had been taken. Now, it may be quite right that every communication from one section of the editor's Irish correspondents should be subjected to such an expurgatorial process, especially as he has earned so high a character on both sides of the channel for his extraordinary wisdom and his amazing impartiality: but the question embodied in the extract above is an important one, and we submit that either he or one of the numerous and diverse writers of his "leaders" should give it prompt and serious consideration. An opinion has gained currency, not without some foundation, as we could show, that the principles of "our Free Church" are so vague as to admit Deists into Unitarian pulpits and Unitarian Societies; and any attempt to shirk the question which has been brought before the attention of the London organ of Unitarianism, will not tend to lessen whatever apprehensions have arisen. "Deist," it has been said, "implies an irreverent spirit," while the wildest of speculators in our Church are remarkable for their reverent and devout sentiments; but we think it might be easy to show that some at least who have advocated deistical opinions have not been wanting in a reverent spirit, and that in the controversy between Deism and Christianity, a mere sentiment of piety has nothing to do. What says our London Oracle? Let it speak.

INTELLIGENCE.

MEETING OF THE REMONSTRANT PRESBYTERY OF BANGOR.

On Thursday, June 9, a meeting of this body was held at Dunmurry. Agreeably to the regulations of the Synod's Code the various congregations are periodically visited, and the present meeting was for the purpose of inquiring into the state of the Dunmurry Congregation. The Rev. J. Mulligan, Moderator, presided. After the reading of the minutes of last meeting of Presbytery by the clerk, (the Rev. J. Orr), the moderator proceeded to make the inquiries directed in the Code. Mr. R Moat represented the Session, and Mr. James Hunter the Committee of the Congregation; and the answers given by both of these gentlemen respecting the condition of the Congregation were most satisfactory.

The Moderator then interrogated Dr. Montgomery with reference to the state of religion in the Congregation. The Reverend Doctor, in reply, said that there was decidedly a more religious and energetic spirit among his people at the present time than formerly, which was partly to be attributed, he believed, to the exertions made by other denominations in the neighbourhood. It is right, he said, to state that these exertions have been made by two parties in

particular—the Established Church and Calvinistic Presbyterians. I do not blame them in the slightest degree for exertions. It was perfectly proper that they should do what I wish we ourselves did a little more—that they should endeavour to spread their own particular views, and to convince my people, if they could, that we were in error. I make no complaint, therefore, of my brethren of either the one Church or the other. If they believed that there was error here, they were perfectly right to endeavour to remove it by such means as were within their reach. In the exertions to which I have alluded, a Church of England congregation was established in one district in Malone some years ago, and in another district very near to this meeting-house in the Falls. I believe these congregations have done good. I believe they have brought out a number of persons belonging to the Established Church who never attended worship before; but I may be forgiven for rejoicing that they have not done any injury to us. The increase has been, I think, an absolute increase of religious feeling, and practically among the class of people who never did attend here, and who would not, as a matter of course, attend. Some twenty-five years ago our Calvinistic Presbyterian brethren established a congregation half-way between Dunmurry and Belfast, in Malone; and very recently a congregation has been established immediately in this village. It is ostentatiously called, in all the newspapers, the Presbyterian Congregation of Dunmurry, and it holds a very conspicuous place. The highest ground within view of us was obtained for it, and it was obtained, I have little doubt, that the shadow of the house might fall on my dwelling-house in the afternoon of each day. Now I think they were perfectly right in organizing the congregation in Malone; but I do maintain that there never was a more iniquitous procedure in ecclesiastical matters than the getting up of this congregation in Dunmurry, and holding out to the world, and obtaining money from the world, on the false impression that the congregation was to be made up out of the congregation of Dr. Montgomery. I am proud to say this day that, of my congregation, no man, woman, or child, has joined that place of worship. I am proud to say, on the contrary, that the arts that were used and the exertions made to erect that place of worship have given additional zeal and energy to my own people, for which I am thankful to God.

To the inquiries made respecting the attendance at public worship, the number of communicants present at the celebration of the Lord's Supper, the means and state of education in the neighbourhood, and other matters, the replies were highly gratifying; and the Moderator, in appropriate terms, congratulated the people and their venerable and beloved pastor on the result of the visitation the Presbytery had held. The proceedings were then terminated with prayer.

In the afternoon the Presbytery and the other ministers present were entertained at dinner by the Congregation in the Female School-house. The chair was occupied by James Hunter, Esq., Beech-lawn. After dinner the usual loyal and patriotic toasts were given, and the chairman then gave "Civil and Religious Liberty"

—the charter-toast of the Church to which they had the honour to belong. The Rev. W. Crozier responded. The Rev. John Orr spoke to "The Remonstrant Presbytery of Bangor."

The Rev. Alexander Orr, Ballyhemlin, then introduced the toast of "The Rev. Dr. Montgomery and the Congregation of Dunmurry." The Doctor, he said, had been condemned and traduced, but they should never forget him, for, when their cause required a man, it was he who stood forward. He mentioned some accusations that had been made against Dr. Montgomery, and continued —Now I state this, I knew Dr. Montgomery's sentiments thirty-four or thirty-five years ago, and I know his sentiments at the present day. I never knew him to change one principle of his creed from that time to this. Now observe, I do not praise the Doctor for that, for I myself have changed in that time considerably; but I say this, that there is no truth in the charge that he is more "orthodox" now than he was thirty years ago. I have known him as a friend for these thirty-five years, and I believe that in his Christian creed he has never altered his mind.

Rev. Dr. Montgomery, in responding to his health, said—If I were to speak as my heart would dictate—and out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh—I should do what would be improper in occupying your time by making you hear an old voice, when so many comparatively new and young ones, of more interest to you, can be so readily called on at present. At the same time, this occasion is of course one that never occurred before—it is one that never can occur again. It is one that fills my mind with many memories, my heart with pleasant feelings of joy and satisfaction, and arouses within me great and cheering hopes for coming years —it may be for all time. I cannot forget that, whilst this is a visitation Presbytery according to the rule—and I believe a most salutary and excellent rule—of our Church, that provides for calling us all to a little account, clergy and laity, and thereby stimulating us to the discharge of our duty with a little more fidelity than we should use, for we are not indifferent to the feelings of our brethren of mankind—I say that, whilst that is the fact, I cannot avoid feeling that the meeting was to some extent arranged for this day out of compliment to myself. At the end of fifty-five years—for it is exactly fifty-five years this day since I first preached in the pulpit I occupy—I feel it to be a kind act in my brethren of the ministry to have come to this place to-day. I can hardly call them my brethren of the ministry; they are my children of the ministry; they are the blessed hope that I now cherish of coming years of our Church—men of integrity, intelligence, and honour, and I believe of Christian principle and sincerity. It is pleasant that my brethren and children of the ministry have been called to this place to hear what I have been doing for the last fifty-five years. That is a very long period of life through which God has supported an individual in the midst of countless anxieties and labour and toil; in the midst of countless blessings and favours, and, above all, the love and approbation of friends far more than he has deserved. After referring in eloquent terms to the Remonstrant struggles, the Reverend Doctor went on to say—I have

lived a long time, and I have endeavoured, as my good friend, Mr. Orr, said, to vindicate certain principles, and he stated what is an absolute truth, but one in which I do not in any manner rejoice, namely, that I have not changed one opinion with regard to civil or religious liberty that I ever entertained. Now, remember, I don't rejoice in that at all, for "No man should be ashamed to confess that he has been in error, for what is it but to acknowledge that he is wiser to-day than he was yesterday?" The man who has changed his ideas, and who will brave public opinion in coming out in opposition to the sentiments that he has long expressed, when he changes his convictions, is a man who obtains a mastery over himself for which he earns special approbation. I know very well that some of my opponents have made a good deal of capital by giving out their confessions, or, as the Methodists say, telling their experience. My friends have been giving their experience. They say—"We supported the Doctor; we were cutting before the point, and a vast deal more advanced than he was. He is a slow coach." Well, they claim credit for the changes they have made. They blame me not for having changed my opinions, but because they chose to say I have changed, whereas I have not; but even if I had, had I not a right to my judgment? I don't know that they have a monopoly of the right of private judgment. Yet, though the circumstances are as I told you, my friends have denounced me and held me up to the world, so that in England, I dare say, I would be mobbed in almost any Unitarian Congregation only on account of the changes stated to have taken place in my opinions, whereas you have testimony that I never changed them. For ten or fifteen years I was called the orthodox Unitarian in England, and I say honestly that I believe I am entitled to the appellation "orthodox." I have said this lightly, because it is quite according to old classical authority to speak the truth cheerfully, but seriously. I do say that, whilst it is true that I am called the orthodox Unitarian, my Christian sentiments are deeper, more abiding, more thoroughly the convictions of my understanding, more thoroughly the inward sentiments of my soul, than they were thirty or forty years ago. I was then theoretically what I am now; and what I feel is precisely this, that as I come near to look at the reality of things, to look into another world, to think of my responsibilities, to think of my lamentable defects in the discharge of my duty, to think of how much I might have done, and how little comparatively I have done, I do feel how solemn a thing it is to look forward to the responsibility of an eternal hereafter. I know how near it is to me, my dear friends. I think I look upon the eternal world more clearly and more distinctly than I did in the bright days of health and strength, and of popular applause. If it be true that I am unchanged in every other thing, it is not true that I am not changed to a deeper and more thorough estimate of the infinite value of Christian principles, of Christian truth, of Christian integrity, and of Christian love. I feel that you will allow the garrulous old man to say these things, because I believe you have chiefly come to this place to-day out of kindness to myself. I have been connected with my congregation in these sentiments, and no

man ever through life was connected with a more worthy people. For them I could not say too much; but where are they? There is not one of them this day here who gave me the right hand of fellowship fifty-five years ago. Dr. Montgomery concluded a lengthened speech by thanking the meeting for their kindness, and assuring them that that was one of the proudest days of his life.

"Our Liberal Fellow-Christians of all Churches" was responded to by Mr. Hugh M'Call, and "The Clergy and Laity of the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster" by the Rev. J. A. Crozier. Other toasts on the list were "The Northern Presbytery of Antrim," "National Education Conducted on its Fundamental Principles," "Peace on Earth and good will towards Men," &c.

REMONSTRANT SYNOD OF ULSTER.

The annual meeting of this reverend body commenced its sittings on Tuesday, June 21st, at 12 o'clock, in the First Meeting-house, Belfast. After the customary devotional services, the outgoing Moderator, the Rev. James Callwell, preached from Gal. v. 1—"Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." The discourse had a direct reference to the recent agitation in the Synod, and the preacher argued that to ascertain whether a candidate was a Christian was not imposing a human creed, or in any way interfering with his Christian liberty. No landowner, he said, would engage a steward, no merchant a clerk, no householder a servant, without making inquiries as to qualifications; and it was only becoming that they who appoint persons to the holiest office to which man can be called, should ask them to declare their religious views, and that the applicants should unhesitatingly give an honest response to the call. Without first discharging this duty, no authority, high or low, legal or illegal, should force them to appoint men to the ministerial office, and pray for God's blessing on their labour. If they did not ask them to declare so much of their religious principles as would show that they were neither Atheists nor Deists through fear of creeds, they would be avoiding Scylla and running into Charybdis.

The Rev. Moore Getty was appointed Moderator for the next twelve months. On taking the chair, he thanked his brethren for the honour conferred on him, and said that he would endeavour to discharge the duties of the office to the best of his ability. Agreeably to synodical arrangements, the term of office of the present Clerk, the Rev. J. A. Crozier, would expire in December, and he moved that the present Assistant Clerk, the Rev. John Orr, should be appointed. Mr. Orr was unanimously elected Clerk. On the motion of the Rev. W. Crozier, it was agreed that the next annual meeting of Synod be held in Belfast, on the third Tuesday of June, 1865. The reports of Presbyteries were then received. In the Templepatrick Presbytery, it appeared that the Rev. R. Cleland had been installed in Crumlin, and the Rev. W. Napier in Ballymoney, and that Newtownlimavady Congregation was vacant. In the other Presbyteries there had been no change. In the matter of Ministerial Support, on which a committee had been appointed,

it appeared that nothing had been done. The committee was continued.

The case of the Carrickfergus Congregation was considered. The resolutions of last meeting of Synod, and the equitable proposals for a settlement of the congregational property made by the Remonstrant portion of the Congregation, which we published at length in our November number, were read, and also the reply of the section which holds the meeting-house, and of the Presbytery of Antrim, both declining to consider them at all. Dr. Montgomery then, in a lengthened statement, exposed the injustice of the party in possession, showing that they have unjustly seized on valuable property to which they had no moral right, and to which he did not believe they had in all contributed £20.

The Rev. J. Montgomery then moved that the Committee in charge of the matter bring in a report next day. The Synod then went into *interloquitur*, and at the end of the proceedings adjourned till next morning.

On Wednesday morning the Synod again met, and sat in *interloquitur* for some time, considering the Carrickfergus Case, when it was agreed that the Synod should take no further action in the matter.

The present state of National Education was introduced by the Rev. J. A. Crozier in a speech of some length, in which he showed that years ago the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church had succeeded in inducing the Commissioners so to alter their regulations as to seriously compromise the broad principles on which the Board was founded, and that the recent arrangement respecting Conventual Schools was only a farther departure towards denominationalism. He concluded by moving the adoption of a petition to Parliament, praying that it would not sanction the changes recently proposed respecting schools connected with convents. The Rev. John Orr seconded the motion, and Dr. Montgomery supported it. It was unanimously agreed to.

The Rev. John Orr, according to notice, moved a resolution respecting the formation of a Theological Library. After some discussion, the resolution was adopted,—the Library to be "mainly Theological." The Clerk read the minutes of the special meeting held in last November, when the Three Questions to be put to candidates for the ministry were annulled. The minutes were confirmed, and the business of the Synod terminated by the Moderator pronouncing the benediction.

NORTHERN SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION.

On Wednesday Evening, June 22, the annual meeting of this Association was held in the Second Meeting-house, Belfast, the Rev. John Orr in the chair. After devotional exercises, the chairman made some appropriate remarks on the value of the Sunday School, and said that the great aim of the teachers should be to awaken religious feelings in the hearts of the young, and teach them to love and fear God. The Secretary, the Rev. C. J.

M'Alester, then read the Annual Report, which mentioned the recent formation of two Schools, one at Ballydorn, Killinchy, the other in connexion with the New Congregation at Ballyclare: it also referred to the publication, at the expense of the Association, of a "Handbook of New Testament Names," by the Rev. Thomas Bowring. The returns from many of the Schools were very satisfactory; but from several no returns had been received. Resolutions, adopting the report, and directing that it should be printed, declaring the importance of the Sunday School work, and the duty of the Christian Church to labour for its increased efficiency, expressing sympathy with the London and Manchester Sunday School Societies, and thanking the Hibernian Bible Society for its continued liberality in granting Bibles and Testaments for the Schools of the Association at reduced prices, were moved and seconded by the Revs. J. Jellie, J. Porter, C. J. M'Alester, T. Bowring, and Messrs. L. Drennan, W. H. Greer, and T. A. Hill. A Committee for the next year was then elected.

At the termination of the proceedings, the Rev. J. Jellie, as Secretary of the Sunday School Teachers' Union, submitted the Report for the past year, from which it appeared that two meetings had been held, at which papers had been read by the Rev. T. Bowring, and Mr. W. H. Greer. A new Committee was appointed, after which the Rev. John Porter was moved to the second chair, and a vote of thanks was passed to the Rev. John Orr, for his kindness in presiding.

THE MEMORIAL HALL, MANCHESTER.

On Wednesday, Jan. 15, the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the Memorial Hall, in Manchester, took place in the presence of a large number of spectators. The Rev. W. Gaskell, after presenting a silver trowel to Ivie Mackie, Esq., to whom had been assigned the honour of laying the foundation stone, read a memorandum, stating the objects of the building. "It was to be erected in commemoration of the Bicentenary of the Two Thousand Ejected Ministers, who, on St. Bartholomew's Day, 1662, so nobly proved their fidelity to conscience by resigning their livings in the English Church. The trusts on which it is to be settled are to be perfectly open for religious, philanthropic, and educational purposes." Alderman Mackie then laid the foundation stone, in the centre of which had been deposited a tin box containing a copy of the latest number of each of the Unitarian papers and periodicals, and other printed documents connected with the denomination; and the Alderman expressed his pleasure in discharging the duty that had been kindly assigned to him, and his belief that the Home Missionary Board, for whose accommodation the building was particularly intended, had done and was doing a good work. The Rev. Dr. Beard, after making some remarks on the object in which they were engaged, and expressing his gratification at the progress which had been made, concluded the proceedings by a prayer and benediction.

In the evening, a company of more than a hundred gentlemen, interested in the erection of the Memorial Hall, dined together at the Clarence Hotel,—James Stansfield, Esq., M.P., in the chair.

OBITUARY.

Death of William Johnston Fox.—The death of this gifted man, for many years eminent as a minister in the Unitarian Church, and subsequently as a politician, and a member of Parliament, took place at his residence, Sussex Place, Regent's Park, London, on June 3rd, in his 79th year. He was born near Wrentham in Sussex, and his father, who was a weaver, having removed to Norwich, he worked with him there as a factory boy. His talents soon attracted attention, and he was sent to a small college belonging to the Independents at Homerton, of which Dr. Pye Smith was at that time president. Becoming heretical while at college, he first settled over a congregation of Universalists at Fareham, in Hampshire. He than removed to the Presbyterian (Unitarian) Chapel at Chichester, and having already won a high reputation for eloquence, he was soon afterwards called to the ministry of Finsbury Chapel, London. Here he continued for a number of years, and was considered the most eloquent preacher connected with the denomination in the metropolis. At this period of his ministry he published two volumes of sermons, entitled "Christ and Christianity," and at an earlier period, "The Apostle John a Unitarian," a valuable tract, which has been more than once re-printed by our Belfast Unitarian Society. During the latter part of his ministry at Finsbury Chapel, his religious views underwent a material change, and he seems to have abandoned the faith in Christianity which he had so long and eloquently preached. His pulpit was now converted into a platform, and his Sunday discourses were chiefly political disquisitions. He threw himself into the Anti-corn Law Agitation, and was the most popular of the many lecturers employed by the League. He subsequently entered the House of Commons as member for Oldham, a post which he held during several successive parliaments, and only resigned two or three years before his death. He was a regular contributor to one of the London weekly papers, and to one at least of the leading magazines.

Died, on May 30, at Craigavad, Holywood, Mary Jane, wife of Mr. Hugh K. Greenfield.

Died, on June 6, at Dunmurry House, Mary, relict of the late William Hunter, Esq., J.P., aged 85 years.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We regret that a correspondence between Mr. James Heron and the Editor, arising out of a paragraph in the *Christian Unitarian* for June, is too late for our present number; it shall appear in our next.

Errata in last Number.—Page 150, line 18, for "to which," read "to facts of which." Same page, line 26, for "agrees," read "argues."

Communications for the Editor, to be addressed by post to Rev. C. J. M'Alester, Holywood; or, otherwise, to 45, Arthur Street, Belfast.

THE

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RÉNAN'S LIFE OF JESUS.

(*Continued from p.* 190.)

IN many parts of his work, M. Rénan speaks of our Saviour's personal character in terms not merely of respect but of ardent admiration. Yet it is remarkable that with the loftiest expressions of praise he often mixes up something which reminds the reader that he is not to allow his feelings to carry him too far or too fast in that direction. We take the following passage, almost at a venture, as one that shews how skilfully our author can play at the old game of "making a compliment and spoiling it," with reference to the holiest being that ever trod the precincts of this earth:—

"This sublime person, who still presides each day over the destiny of the world, may well be called *divine;* not in the sense that Jesus absorbed all that is divine, or, to employ a scholastic expression, was adequate to it; but in the sense that Jesus is the individual who has enabled his species to make the greatest advance towards the divine. Human nature in the mass offers an assemblage of low and selfish beings, superior to the animals only in this, that their selfishness is more reflective. But in the midst of this uniform vulgarity, there are columns which point to the sky, and attest a nobler destiny. Jesus is the loftiest of those columns which shew to man whence he comes and at what he ought to aim. In him is condensed all that is good and elevated in our nature. *He was not impeccable:* he conquered the same passions that we combat: no angel of God comforted him, other than his own good conscience: no Satan tempted him, other than the one that each of us carries in his own heart. As many of his grand features have been lost to us by the fault of his disciples, so also it is probable that many of his faults have been concealed. But never did any one, as effectually as he, cause the interest of humanity to predominate in his life over the narrow feelings of self-love (*les petitesses de l'amour propre*). Devoted unreservedly to his idea, he ranked every thing else so far beneath it, that, towards the close of his life, the universe no longer existed for him. It is by this paroxysm

of heroic will that he has reached heaven. There never was a man—except, perhaps, Sakya-Mouni—who so completely trampled under foot, family, the pleasures of this world, every temporal care. He lived only on his Father, and the divine mission which he firmly believed that he was fulfilling.

For ourselves, doomed to perpetual childhood and condemned to impotence, who labour without reaping, and who shall never see the fruit of what we have sown, let us bow before these demi-gods. They knew what we know not; how to create, to affirm, to act. Will this great originality reappear? or will the world content itself with pursuing the tracks opened by these bold innovators (*créateurs*) of by-gone ages? We know not. But whatever may be the unlooked-for phenomena of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed. The worship which he founded (*son culte*) will be for ever young; the legend of his life will never cease to call forth tears; his sufferings will melt the best hearts; all ages will proclaim that among the sons of men there has not been born a greater than Jesus."—(Pp. 457–9.)

Here there is much that deserves to be described as eulogy equally eloquent and just; but also not a little that is manifestly thrown in for the mere purpose of depreciation. We know not whether we ought to include in the latter class the equalizing of our blessed Lord to Sakya-Mouni, an oriental sage, whose whole doctrine is aptly summed up in two short sentences: "Everything is nothing, and Virtue is its own reward." Perhaps, indeed, this comparison, revolting as it is to the mind of the pious Christian, may, to a philosopher holding the views of M. Rénan, appear rather complimentary to our Saviour than otherwise. But no one can pretend that the assertion of *Christ's peccability* is ought else than an attack upon the purity of his character;—whilst the insinuation that the disciples have knowingly concealed (*dissimulé*) his faults, is a stab aimed at the Saviour's heart through the sides of those venerable men.

The stab is as needless for the purpose of M. Rénan as it is meant to be fatal against the character of Christ: for our author is of opinion that in the Four Gospels we can trace indications of weaknesses in Christ, enough to guard his most enthusiastic follower against excess of admiration. Thus he conceives that Jesus, though he did not believe himself to be descended from David, yet allowed himself to be saluted as the "Son of David," because, in the minds of the multitude, that title was equivalent to that of the "Messiah;" herein stooping to

the ideas which were prevalent in his time, though they were not precisely his own, "just as he had done with regard to the baptism of John, which nevertheless he held in little esteem."—(Pp. 237—239.) He believes that our Saviour's instructions to his disciples "contain *the germs of a real fanaticism*—germs which in the middle ages were to be developed after a cruel fashion;" but this he looks upon as excusable, because no revolution is accomplished without a certain degree of roughness. "If Luther and *the actors of the French Revolution* (!!) had been obliged to observe the rules of politeness, the Reformation and the Revolution would not have taken place."—(P. 326.) In Jerusalem, he says, Jesus played too often the part of "aggressor," and his reasonings were occasionally "sophistical." "He seeks for misconceptions, and prolongs them on purpose;" and he launches many "bitter shafts" against his opponents.—(Pp. 345, 346.) "It is well for us that there was no law to punish gross insults (*l'outrage*) against a whole class of citizens, else the Pharisees would have been unassailable."—(P. 327.) "He loved honours,—for honours promoted his views, and established his title as the Son of David. Therefore, when [at the supper at Bethlehem] they spoke to him of the poor, he replied rather sharply, 'You have the poor always with you, but me you have not always': and, roused to excitement (*s'exaltant*), he promised immortality to the woman who, at that critical moment, gave him a pledge of love," by pouring a rich perfume on his head.—(P. 374.) He was occasionally the subject of less amiable feelings. "At times he allowed a gloomy resentment against his enemies to peep forth." (*Parfois, il laissait percer contre ses ennemis un ressentiment sombre.*—P. 371.) Now and then "his reason appeared to be disturbed:" (*on eût dit que sa raison se troublait*). "The great vision of the kingdom of God, perpetually blazing before his eyes, made his head giddy, (*lui donna le vertige*): at times his disciples thought him insane, (*un fou*); his enemies declared him to be possessed. His temperament, excessively passionate, carried him beyond the bounds of human nature."—(P. 318.)

In these, and in many other parts of his book, M. Rénan gives to the charges which he prefers against our

Lord a double sting, by the transparent apologies with which he pretends to excuse them.

At the risk of being tedious, we shall translate a paragraph which treats of the nature of that sincerity—*oriental sincerity*—which he concedes to his hero.

"An absolute conviction, or, to speak more correctly, the enthusiasm which deprived him of the power of doubting, covered all those bold assertions. We, with our cold and scrupulous natures, scarcely understand this manner of being possessed by an idea of which a person makes himself the apostle. To us, members of a deeply serious race, conviction signifies sincerity with ourselves. But sincerity with self has little or no meaning among oriental people, little used to the refinements of the critical spirit. Good faith and imposture are words which, in our rigid conscience, are opposed as two irreconcilable terms. But in the East there are a thousand shifts and turns from the one to the other. . . . Substantive truth has very little value for an oriental: he sees every thing through the medium of his ideas, his interests, his passions.

"History is impossible if we do not openly admit that there are various limits to sincerity. All great things are done by the people: now a man can lead the people only by lending himself to their ideas. The philosopher who, knowing this, isolates himself and entrenches himself in his own noble soul, is highly to be praised. But he who takes humanity with its illusions, and seeks to act upon it and with it, cannot be blamed. Cæsar knew very well that he was not the son of Venus. France would not be what it is, if credence had not been yielded for a thousand years to the holy *ampulla* of Rheims. It is easy for us, powerless as we are, to call this lying; and, proud of our timid veracity, to treat with contempt the heroes who have fought, under other conditions, the battle of life. When we, with our scruples, shall have done what they did with their lies (*mensonges*), we shall have a right to be severe upon them. At least we must distinguish broadly societies like our own, in which every thing takes place in the full light of reflection, from those simple and credulous states of society in which were produced the beliefs that have ruled over centuries. There is no grand foundation that does not rest upon a legend. The only thing to be blamed in such a case is human nature, which wishes to be deceived." (Pp. 252—254.)

It would be a waste of words to point out the shocking outrage upon every principle of truth and honesty formulated by M. Rénan in these brief sentences. None of the casuistical doctors among the Jesuits whose atrocious maxims have been unveiled by Pascal in his *Letters of a Provincial*—not Escobar himself, hitherto supposed to be unapproachable in his sublime disregard of integrity,—has delivered a definition more immoral than those which

the eloquent, liberal, and philosophical author of the *Life of Jesus* here adopts and consecrates;—not only adopts and consecrates as his own sentiment and rule of judgment, but ascribes to the holy Saviour as his rule of action. We are not favourable to the use of warm language in the discussion of religious questions, nor do we mean to employ such at present. But if others have rejected such odious imputations on the character of Christ with indignation, we certainly think they are not to be too severely censured; for when is warmth allowable if not in vindicating the truthfulness of the Son of God?

But we must not forget that we are not writing a refutation, but a review of M. Rénan. We pass on, therefore, at once, to the opinions which he expresses respecting the miraculous powers ascribed in the Gospels to Christ. He tells us that—

"Miracles passed at this epoch for the indispensable mark of that which is divine; and for the sign of prophetic vocations. . . Jesus had, therefore, to choose between the two lines of action; either to renounce his mission or to become a wonder-worker (*thaumaturge*). . . . Criticism experiences no embarrassment before historical phenomena of this order. A wonder-worker of our own days, except it be one of an extreme simplicity, as for example, the stigmatized sisters in Germany," [*certain nuns, on whose body the five wounds of Christ are said to have been reproduced, by the intensity of their devotion,*] "is odious, because he works miracles without believing them himself. But let us take a Francis of Assisa," [*the founder of the Franciscans,*] "the question is at once totally changed; the miraculous cycle of the birth of the order of St. Francis, far from disgusting us, yields a real pleasure to our minds. . . . We must remember, besides, that every idea loses somewhat of its purity as soon as it aims at being realized. No one succeeds unless the delicacy of his mind undergoes some crushing. Such is the weakness of the human mind, that the best causes are usually gained by bad reasons. . . . Moses, Christopher Columbus, Mahomet, have triumphed over obstacles only by taking into account the weakness of men, and by not giving at all times true reasons for the truth. . . .

"Among the miraculous narratives of which the Gospels contain such a tiresome enumeration, it is impossible to distinguish the miracles which have been palmed upon Jesus by mere opinion, from those in which he consented to play an active part. It is especially impossible to determine whether the offensive circumstances of strainings, (*efforts,*) shudderings, and other features savouring of jugglery, are quite historical, or are the fruit of the belief of the narrators, strongly prejudiced in favour of theurgy," [*the power of working miracles;*] "and living, in that respect, in a

world analogous to that of the '*spirites*'* of our days. Almost all the miracles that Jesus thought he performed, appear to have been miracles of healing. . . . Jesus had no more idea than his countrymen of a rational science of medicine. Like everybody else, he believed that a cure might be effected by certain religious practices. . . . To heal was considered as a moral act. Jesus, who felt his own moral force, must have believed himself specially endowed with the gift of healing. Convinced that the touch of his robe, the imposition of his hands, did good to the sick, he would have acted harshly if he had refused to the sufferers a relief which it was in his power to afford.—(Pp. 256—263.)

"Many circumstances, moreover, appear to indicate that Jesus only became a worker of wonders late, and reluctantly. Often he performs his miracles only after requiring to be entreated; with a sort of ill humour; and reproaching those who asked him to perform them for the grossness of their minds. . . . We are then allowed to believe that the reputation of wonder-worker was forced upon him; that he did not resist it strenuously; but that he did nothing to strengthen it; and that at all events, he felt the vanity of the general opinion in this respect.—(Pp. 264, 265.)

"We should be untrue to the proper style of history, were we to hearken too much to our own repugnances; and in order to evade objections which might be raised against the character of Jesus, suppress facts, which, in the eyes of his contemporaries, were placed in the first rank. . . . We will admit then, without hesitation, that acts which would now be considered as tricks of illusion or acts of folly, filled a great space in the life of Jesus. Must we sacrifice to this unpleasing side the sublime side of such a life? By no means. A mere sorcerer, after the manner of Simon Magus, would never have brought on a moral revolution such as Jesus has wrought.—(P. 266.)

"In a general sense, then, it is true to say that Jesus only became a wonder-worker and exorcist in spite of himself. A miracle is usually far more the work of the public than of the person to whom it is ascribed. If Jesus had obstinately refused to perform prodigies, the multitude would have created them in his name; the greatest miracle would have been that he should have performed none: never would the laws of history and popular psychology have been more completely repealed. The miracles of Jesus were a violence which the genius of his age committed upon him; a concession which a transient necessity extorted from him. Thus the exorcist and the wonder-worker have fallen; but the religious reformer will live for ever."—(Pp. 267, 268.)

We have here given the principal part of the chapter in which Rénan discusses the miracles of Jesus, and have selected everything in it that bears even the semblance

* We cannot translate this word: it belongs to no language with which we are acquainted: and therefore we leave it, letter for letter, as we find it in the *Vie de Jésus*. It seems to have something to do with *spirit-rapping*.

of an argument. We might appeal with confidence to the men of the new school themselves to determine whether anything could be advanced more weak, flimsy, and superficial. We pass over designedly the parallels instituted between Christ and Simon Magus, Mahomet, Francis of Assisa, the stigmatized nuns, the Dantons and Robespierres of the Reign of Terror, and the professors of spirit-rapping; although it is a topic on which, if sufficient space were at our command, we should wish to offer some comment. We confine ourselves to the light in which the above extracts place the moral character of him "in whom," as Rénan himself tells us, "is condensed all that is good and elevated in our nature."—(P. 458.) He had no miraculous power, we are told; but he thought he had; at least he thought that he possessed the gift of healing; it would have been cruel in him to refuse to the sick who implored his aid, the simple benefit of a word or a touch which could do them so much good. But the public generally, and his disciples more especially, believed in his wonder-working power, and often importuned him to exert it. He did so, but reluctantly (*contre-coeur*), and with reproaches for their hardness of heart. In fact, the character of miracle-monger was forced upon him by the spirit of the time; he had to choose between assuming it and abandoning his pretensions to the office of Messiah, to which he believed himself to be called. He accepted the character which seemed to be thrust upon him by the necessity of his position. He not only allowed the idea of his possessing such powers to spread abroad without contradicting it, but he "consented to play an active part" in its propagation; and it is uncertain whether he did not stoop to help it forward by "shudderings, strainings, and other acts savouring of jugglery." That is to say, Christ tacitly, if not actively, lent himself to delusion and imposture, for the purpose of carrying on his mission! His mission could not have succeeded without the employment of such means. His mission was to reform, to elevate, and spiritualize human nature. That mission has been largely, though as yet but partially, successful; but it is destined to gain new and still more glorious triumphs, and never to be superseded throughout all time. That is to say, no means

have been found so effectual for refining, purifying, and elevating the moral nature of man as those of illusion and fraud, which constitute its degradation and disgrace! This, we must tell M. Rénan, is not merely to depreciate the character of Christ, but to libel the very nature of man, and to calumniate the God who made it what it is.

There is just one point of view in which we can contemplate this chapter with satisfaction. It proves that, in the mind of so determined a sceptic as Rénan, there is no possibility of separating the character of Christ from the allegation of miraculous powers. He throws overboard all attempts to get rid of the claim to such powers as put forward in our Saviour's own time and with his sanction. He admits that Christianity never could have triumphed as it did without the assertion of such powers. Thus the only choice that is left is between the admission of that assertion as true, and the rejection of it as a fraud;—an alternative which we would wish the new lights of the Christian Church seriously and earnestly to consider.

It will have been remarked that the chapter, of which we have above given a copious analysis, deals with the question of Christ's miracles in a very brief, vague, and superficial way. It never once comes to close quarters with the subject, or ventures to grapple even with one of the many narratives of such facts recorded in the Gospels. The author of the *Life of Jesus* passes over those portions of the New Testament in general with a haughty unconcern, as if they were unworthy of refutation or even of attention. But there is one miracle on which he has favoured us with his views in detail, and we now place his comments before our readers; allowing him, as we have uniformly done, to speak for himself. The miracle here referred to is the raising of Lazarus from the tomb, as recorded in the eleventh chapter of John's Gospel.

Rénan holds that "at this distance of time, having only one document before us, and that a document which presents many evident traces of artifice in its composition, it is impossible to decide whether, in this case, all is fiction, or whether some real fact which occurred at Bethany served as a foundation to the rumours spread abroad." Nevertheless, after considering all the circum-

stances, he is of opinion that the belief of the resurrection of Lazarus had for its basis a substratum of fact. "It is, therefore, probable," he says, "that the prodigy of which we are treating, was not one of those miracles which are completely legendary, and for which no one is responsible. In other words, we think that *something took place at Bethany which was regarded as a resurrection.*"—(P. 360.) It is the office of the historian to discover what this something was.

"It appears," says M. Rénan, "that Lazarus was sick, and that it was upon receipt of a message from his sisters that Jesus left Perœa. The joy occasioned by his arrival may have restored Lazarus to life. Perhaps also the ardent desire of stopping the mouths of those who scornfully denied the divine mission of their friend, carried these impassioned persons beyond all bounds. *Perhaps Lazarus, still pale from his sickness, caused himself to be swathed in bandages like a corpse, and shut up in his family tomb.* . . . Martha and Mary came forth to meet Jesus, and without allowing him to enter Bethany, conducted him to the grotto. The emotion which Jesus experienced near the tomb of his friend whom he believed to be dead, may have been taken by the by-standers for the agitation, the shuddering which accompanied miracles. . . . . *Jesus*, (on the hypothesis above expressed), *desired to see once more the friend whom he had loved so tenderly;* and the stone having been removed, Lazarus came forth with his bandages, and his head bound round with a napkin. This apparition must have been looked upon by the multitude as a resurrection. *Faith knows no other law than the interest of what she regards as truth.* The end which she pursues being to her absolutely holy, she feels no scruple in summoning bad arguments to her aid, when good ones do not succeed. If this proof is not sound, so many others are so! If this prodigy is not real, so many others were so! Intimately persuaded that Jesus was a worker of wonders, *Lazarus and his two sisters might help out the working of one of his miracles;* like so many pious men, who, convinced of the truth of their religion, have sought to triumph over the obstinacy of others, by means, of which they clearly saw the weakness. The state of their conscience was that of the stigmatized nuns, the convulsionaries [at the tomb of the Abbé Paris], the possessed sisters of the convent, drawn on by the influence of the world in which they live, and by their own belief in fictitious acts. As for Jesus, *he was no more able than St. Bernard, or St. Francis of Assisa, to control the avidity of the crowd and of his own disciples for the marvellous.* Death, besides, was going to restore to him in a few days his divine freedom, and deliver him from the fatal necessities of a character (*d'un rôle*) which was becoming every day more exacting, more difficult to support."—(Pp. 361—363).

We have read many sceptical commentaries on the eleventh chapter of John; but never one which seems

to us more utterly absurd and unreasonable than this explanation, if such it can be called. Whatever may be thought of Jesus in other respects, it cannot be denied that he who, through the instrumentality of a few fishermen and mechanics, was able to draw over the whole civilized world to adopt his ideas and venerate his person, must have known how to choose his friends wisely and well. Was such a person likely to take into his confidence a family like that of Lazarus and his sisters as here described,—people whose total want of principle, whose silliness and rashness, must, at every moment, have imperilled, and were certain, at some time or other, to destroy the success of his whole enterprise? What scheme could have been devised more calculated to ensure detection and exposure than that which these fanatics adopted? The whole success of it depended upon an accident, and an accident, perhaps, of all that can be conceived, the least likely to occur, namely, that of Jesus expressing a wish to see once more the face of his departed friend, who, as he believed, had lain in the grave four days, in a warm climate, where decomposition sets in almost immediately after the extinction of life. What wish could be less natural on his part, less likely to be foreseen on theirs? Yet all occurred as they had calculated, and the whole of the persons who were present,—of course with the exception of those who were parties to the trick,—were deceived by this clumsy contrivance! None of the confederates (of whom there must have been several) ever came forward to discover the plot. Even Jesus himself was imposed upon by the stupid and self-revealing fraud. What an idea does this give us of his sagacity! Was one, who could be thus imposed upon, likely to establish a faith that has overturned all the mythologies and all the philosophies of Egypt and Syria, of Greece and Rome? Is it possible? Is it even conceivable? To us it seems that the man who can believe this, has no reason to reproach Christians with excess of credulity. He believes a greater miracle than any of those which are recorded in the Gospels.

(*To be concluded in our next.*)

A PRAYER.

The following beautiful prayer is copied from Knight's *Passages of a Working Life.* It was found by him written on a blank leaf of a Prayer-book of the Princess Amelia, youngest daughter of George III., who died in November, 1810, after suffering for many years from a severe malady, and whose death was the immediate cause of her father's derangement:—

"Gracious God, support thy servant in this time of trial. Let not the least murmur escape my lips, nor any sentiment but of the deepest resignation enter my heart; let me make the use Thou intendest of that affliction Thou hast laid upon me. It has convinced me of the vanity and emptiness of all things here; let it draw me to Thee as my support, and fill my heart with pious trust in Thee, and in the blessings of a redeeming Saviour, as the only consolations of a state of Trial. Amen."

LIFE.

"Perfect through sufferings."—Heb. ii. 10.

Must I suffer ere my spirit
Shall attain its higher goal?
Opens there no smoother pathway
To the upward struggling soul?
No,—like seed that through thick darkness
Gropes its way above the sod,
So this soul of mine must ever
Struggle through the dark to God!

Light untempered pales the blossom,
Suns unclouded blight the grain,—
So the Love that's winged with Wisdom
Calls his clouds and gives them rain.
I, a plant in God's great garden,
Grain within his guarded field,
Need I not, as well as sunshine,
Rain to make me thrive and yield?

In the day the great earth wearies,
Sickens 'neath the burning sun;
In the night she rallies nobly,
Till her strength is all re-won.

Dews fresh dropped from Nature's chalice,
Cool and quicken all her powers,
Fit her for another morrow's
Struggle through the sultry hours.

In the light the soul grows sickly,
Sluggish, faint,—until at length,
In the dark how strong it struggles,
Battling for its bartered strength!
Fears, like dews, refresh and hallow
All its powers for noble strife;
Fit and nerve it for another
Upward effort into life.

Life is toil,—he lives, he only,
Who, amid his daily cares,
Sees a mighty end upspringing,
Like choice wheat among the tares.
He who patience gleans from trial,
Strength from struggle, hope from pain,
He twice lives—on earth—in heaven—
He who lives once, lives again!—C. A. Briggs.

CONGREGATIONAL MEMOIRS.

No. II.—LARNE AND KILWAUGHTER—(*Continued from p.* 201).

Merely mentioning that on December 22, 1732, the *Belfast Register* records the funeral of "a son of Rev. Mr. Clugston, of Larne," and that on September 9, 1733, "the Session of Larne came to consider how the sum of One Pound sterling should be divided amongst the poor of the Old Congregation, which sum was left to be divided among them by the last will and testament of John Murdoch, son of Robert Murdoch, merchant, of the Congregation of Enver;" I proceed to quote, from our old Session Book, the following entries which refer to matters of greater importance:—

"Nov. 30, 1733.—The Session met for prayer, and came to consider of the great omission of that duty, that though it had been for some time after Mr. Clugston's settlement observed, yet had been for above one year by-past wholly neglected. Resolved to

meet once in every fortnight for time to come. Resolved, also, that they would begin and end with prayer, and spend the interval in conference, which might tend to their knowledge and edification; and that any of the members that should happen to be absent from any of these meetings, should be obliged to give in their reasons for the same next Sabbath, or undergo a reprimand. Concluded with prayer.

Dec. 13.—The Session met and observed the resolution above said. Discoursed of private judgment, of a heretic, and the Trinity. Concluded with prayer.

"Dec. 28.—They met, and after prayer discoursed of the covenant of grace, of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, and whether a person was obliged to believe anything as an article of the Christian faith which he could not understand, and, lastly, of the imputation of Adam's first sin to all his posterity. Concluded with prayer.

"Jan. 10, 1734.—Only a few of the Session, with correspondents, (viz., Mr. Workman and Mr. James Smith) met, and after prayer, they talked of the way the Westminster Confession speaks of the union of the two natures in Christ in the 8th chapter; secondly, of the Gospel prohibition of eating blood; thirdly, of prayer, to whom and for whom; fourthly, of Synods and their power; fifthly, of the miseries the fall brought upon mankind, and whether they were fairly described by the Confession thereof to all mankind, and whether that was a damning sin in infants. Concluded with prayer.

"Jan. 31.—The Session met, and after prayer, conferred on several things; but the minister, Mr. C., being absent, did not go so thoroughly as they might on some points; only talked of the first chapter of the Westminster Confession, concerning the light of nature leaving men inexcusable, and yet not being sufficient, &c., &c.; also of Christ, that there is no other name given among men by which we can be saved, and the meaning of the text; also the promises made by Christ of the signs that should follow, believing on him, how that appeared; and of a man's believing anything as an article of faith, merely because another person believed it. Concluded with prayer.

"Feb. 14.—Part of the Session met for prayer and conference, and also for accounting with their Minister; but John Finlay (Session Clerk) not being there till the latter end, had no knowledge of what past, and a motion made by him of entering upon said accounting, was rejected by some of the members who had taken offence at his discourse of some experience of his own concerning unsuccessfulness in prayer against some particular sin. After some little discourse thereabout the Session concluded with prayer, he giving his promise that he would give them no further trouble of that kind."

I think the foregoing is a very interesting picture, in the Dutch style, of the "interior" of a Presbyterian Meeting-House 130 years ago. The cruel allusion by the Session Clerk to the "unsuccessfulness of prayer against

some particular sin" will be explained hereafter under date May 17, 1747.

"1734.—Robert Mairns died, and left by his will and testament, to the poor of the Old Meeting-House (Congregation) of Larne, the sum of Five Pounds sterling. Mr. Robt. Wilson, who was grandson to said Robert Mairns, made a motion to this Session, that if they thought proper he would lay out the said money for a fine morcloth or pall, which was agreed to, and the same was brought from Dublin, made and ready, at Five Pounds Sixteen Shillings; and the said pall was to be lodged with William Glasgow Major, and to be let out to those of our Congregation that had occasion for it at half-price, and all the money that was got for it to be for the use of the poor of our own Congregation.

"Dec. 21, 1735.—The Session agreed that the price or hire of the said pall should be a Crown at a time out of the Congregation, and Half-a-Crown within the Congregation. But considering that we are nearer allied to the New Congregation, or Congregation of Enver, than any other, the Session agrees that the hire of said pall to any funeral of any person without our bounds shall be a Crown, yet to the New Congregation only Four Shillings, English, and to our own Half-a-Crown."

I must say that the compliment here paid to "Enver" was not very great. It would have almost required a pair of good spectacles to see it; but I am sure it was kindly intended and kindly taken. There are various annual settlements for the pall-money recorded in the Session Book. The last is dated July 25, 1759.

A document in my possession states, that, "in 1744, a common printed lease was granted (not in trust) by the Earl of Antrim to William Agnew, Esq., of Kilwaughter, of 20 perches of ground on which the Meeting-House in Larne stands, and a tenement in Larne for 31 years, from November, 1744, at the yearly rent of Four Shillings." In the old Session Book, I find no reference at this date to any such lease, nor do I know anything about the "tenement in Larne," which was then connected with the Meeting-House. There is certainly no such "tenement" so connected now. All our present Congregational premises, which, thank God, are tolerably extensive, are inclosed within our Meeting-House walls.

About this period in our history I meet with an entry in our Session Book to which I have already referred, and which I here quote, not with any feeling of satisfaction at finding that, even in "the elect" of our flock, there was in those days a black sheep, but mainly to

record the manly consistency of the Session of Larne and Kilwaughter, who, when Satan wished to present himself again "among the sons of God," had the grace and nerve to turn him out.

"1747, May 17.—James Ramsay laid before the Session the resolution of Robert Glasgow, who formerly was a member of the Session, and is now guilty of fornication, and refuseth to give *public* satisfaction, but offereth to do it only *before the Session*. The Session, after consideration, unanimously agreed not to give way to any such method, but to follow the old rule, as they were convinced that the same was a Gospel rule."

Servants of God, well done. The name of Glasgow was once common, and also deservedly respected in this neighbourhood. I do not believe there is now amongst us one who, even as a namesake, can be hurt by the foregoing reference to the backslidings of Robert Glasgow in 1747.

On the 13th of May, 1752, the Larne Meeting-House (which had been repaired in 1700) was taken down and rebuilt. On this occasion, the Session Clerk, with a simple faith, which an infidel age might envy, records, "a very bad, wet summer. Sermon every day without, and not one bad Sabbath except the second that rained; only lecture that day." I must confess that our reputation for bringing good weather has not continued to the present day. But even in the present day we are not so bad in this respect, as a local joke of very ancient standing represents us to be. "On the 27th October, 1752, old style, the Meeting-House was fully slated, and cleared of the rubbish within." The reader will remember that the previous Meeting-House had been thatched.

Very soon after the rebuilding of his Meeting-House, viz., in 1755, Mr. Clugston retired from the active duties of the ministry, and in the same year Rev. Robert Sinclair was ordained as his assistant and successor. Mr. Clugston did not die until twenty years later, *i.e.*, in 1775; but as his name henceforth disappears, as officiating minister, from the records of the Congregation, I shall conclude this part of my narrative with some particulars concerning the personal history of the fifth minister of Larne and Kilwaughter. Mr. Clugston, as already stated, was remarkable for his charitable disposition and

generosity to the poor. Tradition still affirms that on one occasion, when he was coming home out of Larne to his house at Ballyboley, with the family dinner in a basket (for in those simple days ministers were not above carrying a basket), he gave away to a poor person whom he met on the road the materials for the domestic meal, for which piece of improvidence he got scant thanks when he reached home empty-handed. This story, together with a host of other similar stories respecting my venerable predecessor, which are told on the same authority, may not have been literally true; but it must have had a substratum of truth. Respecting an uncharitable man, the story would never have been invented. Mr. Clugston resided at Ballyboley, within about a mile of Larne, in the house which is now occupied by my friend and hearer, Mrs. Arthur Robinson, who kindly gave me, some years ago, the old oak arm-chair which had once belonged to the previous occupant of Ballyboley. This interesting relic of a good and brave man, I have had much pleasure in placing in the minister's retiring room in our Meeting-House, where I trust it will be kept as an heir-loom for the successive ministers of Larne and Kilwaughter. When I came to this neighbourhood, Mrs. Robinson's mother, who was then an old woman, told me that she remembered, when she was a very young child, seeing Mr. Clugston sitting in this chair in the sun at the end of his house at Ballyboley.* Mr. C. seems to have married shortly after his settlement in Larne, which took place in 1717. Who his wife was I never heard; but she probably died early, as local tradition is silent respecting her. After her death, her husband appears to have put himself under the charge and control of his sister-in-law, "Miss Betty," whose reputation for charity does not by any means stand so high amongst us as that of her brother-in-law. On the death of "Miss Betty," the kind-hearted old minister seems to have fallen into the hands of his hired house-keeper, Helena Logan, from Broughshane, who married her fellow-servant, William M'Dowell;

* Mr. Clugston had also a grazing-farm at Ballyrickart, in the parish of Raloo, which passed (I suppose by purchase) into the hands of his successor, whose son, John Sinclair, sold it to a man called Fullerton, by whose representative it is now held.

and this couple, on the death of their aged master, and in the absence of his only son, appear to have retained possession of the house and farm of Ballyboley, as well as of the minister's papers and other effects. It is said that, at the time of his decease, my predecessor was not on very good terms with his son, Rev. James Clugston, of Bandon. This, considering what I have stated respecting the last days of the old man, is not unlikely to be the case. By a singular dying injunction, Mr. Clugston's son ordered that all his papers of every kind should be burned after his decease, so that, even if any of his father's papers had come into his possession, they must have been destroyed. But I am happy to say that, in addition to the arm-chair, I have been so fortunate as to pick up some of the books of my venerable predecessor, with his name in them in his own hand-writing. Mr. Clugston died at Ballyboley on the 10th day of August, 1775, in the 80th year of his age. He was interred in Larne churchyard, where, twenty years afterwards, the mortal remains of his assistant and successor, Mr. Sinclair, were laid beside him. A Latin inscription, by an unknown hand, on a common tombstone, details faithfully but simply the ministerial and personal characters of these two most estimable men—"They were lovely and pleasant in their lives. In their graves they were not divided." This inscription will be given at the end of Mr. Sinclair's ministry. The name, "Josias Clugston," which has long been hereditary as a Christian name in some families in Kilwaughter, shews the permanent respect that is there entertained towards the good old man. Of late, there has been somewhat of a disposition shewn to soften the "Josias" into "Joseph"; but in future I shall insist on the patronymic of my pious predecessor being given pure and simple, so as to preserve a little longer, in the peaceful scenes of his pastoral labours, the name and memory of the truly venerable fifth minister of Larne and Kilwaughter.*

(*To be continued.*)

* For some of the following particulars respecting Mr. Clugston's descendants, I am indebted to the kindness of my former teacher, Rev. W. Hunter, of Bandon. Mr. C. appears, so far as I can ascertain, to have never had more than two children, both of whom were sons. Of these one died, as above stated, in December 22, 1732. The other and only surviving son, Mr. James Clugston, was educated for

CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT CHRIST.

When, from time to time, we have dwelt on a tendency in the Unitarian Church to abandon revelation, and have contended for the duty of acknowledging Christ's divine mission as a fundamental principle, if we would retain our title to the Christian name, we have been charged with betraying the cause of religious freedom, and attempting to set up a human creed; and it has been continually alleged, that no one who disbelieved the authority of revelation would ever seek to ally himself with the ministry of the Christian Church. Only within the last day or two, one who occasionally supplies a vacant pulpit in our Irish Non-Subscribing Church, expressed his belief that there was no minister in the Unitarian denomination who did not acknowledge the authority of Scripture.

the ministry; and in the Larne Session Book, I find an entry which I gladly transcribe as shewing the affectionate interest which the Larne elders took in everything connected with their minister's son:—"1739, June 27. John M'Brown reported that he attended the Presbytery of Belfast. At that Presbytery Mr. James Clugston was licensed, and afterwards preached his first sermon in the Old Meeting-House. His text in the forenoon was Eccles. xii. 3; in the afternoon Psalm cxlv. 8, 9." Mr. James Clugston, the son of my predecessor, was ordained in Bandon, in 1745, where he married. His wife's name was Biggs. Her father was a tanner, and on his death, she, being an only child, succeeded to the business, which she carried on without any assistance from her husband, who thus, in apostolic fashion, "lodged with one (Biggs), a tanner." Mr. James Clugston devoted the whole of his time to the duties of his office; and when he died, which was in 1780, only five years after his father, it was said of him, by a Rector of the Established Church, that "an angel had gone to heaven." Mr. Clugston (of Bandon) left two children—a son and daughter. The son, Thomas (his father would have been no less an angel if he had called him Josias), was a man of considerable talents, but great eccentricity of character. He went to London, where he died unmarried, and with him, of course, the name of Clugston ceased. The daughter, a most amiable and estimable woman, married George Allman, Esq., proprietor of the Overton Cotton Mills, near Bandon. She left five sons and four daughters, of whom two sons and two daughters died unmarried. One of the surviving sons married Miss Lane, of Cork; the other two married two sisters, daughters of William Dowden, Esq., of Bandon. One of her surviving daughters married the late Rev. Dr. Armstrong, of Dublin; the other married William Clear, Esq., of Cork. Two of the great-great-grandsons of Rev. Josias Clugston, of Larne, viz., Rev. G. A. Armstrong, of Dublin, and Mr. Allman, of Bandon, were in this neighbourhood a few years ago; and I had much pleasure in taking them to see the former residence of the good old man, who was at once their venerable forefather and my reverend predecessor.

The indignant rejection, by our Non-Subscribing brethren, some years ago, of a resolution binding them to admit no one into the ministry in their body who did not distinctly avow his belief in revelation, showed too plainly that there was a disposition to require no such qualification; and any one who has been watching recent movements in the Unitarian denomination in England, must be fully satisfied that Unitarianism is no longer regarded there as implying belief in a divine revelation. The latest and most striking evidence of the extent to which scepticism has permeated the denomination, is exhibited in the recent meeting of the Lancashire and Cheshire Provincial Assembly, whose proceedings we briefly report. This is the Assembly of ministers and laymen who call themselves "Presbyterians," while they hold no Presbyteries, glory in being the representatives of Matthew and Philip Henry, while they trample on every principle as well as every doctrine which these good and earnest men valued, and who are ready to admit into their fraternity every minister and every congregation, no matter how loose the principles which they profess, for, in the memorable words of Dr. Beard, uttered at the meeting of 1862, "they did not ask what any man's opinions were"! What their precise principles are it is difficult to ascertain; they bear something of a chameleon character. They talk loudly at their business and their dinner meetings against sectarianism, and yet they call themselves by a sectarian name—Unitarians; at one time they profess to make "the sufficiency of Scripture and the right of private judgment" their basis, and at another they represent themselves simply as "free inquirers," holding the expansive theory, we suppose, of our friend, the Rev. S. C. Nelson, who says of the Presbytery over which he presides—"Our only bond of union is Free Inquiry." Their organization, we believe, is partly for social intercourse, and partly, of late, for missionary action. The preacher this year was the Rev. William Binns, of Birkenhead, who took occasion to speak his freest thoughts on religious subjects, selecting for his text the words of Paul—"I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say." The tendency of the sermon was to strip Christianity of everything supernatural or authoritative—

to place the Bible on a level with the fabulous legends and the literary compositions of other nations, and to remove Christ from the position which the Gospel narrative gives him; in short, *to preach Christianity without Christ.* An extract or two will show distinctly the character of the discourse:—

"Though the Bible ceases to be a divine oracle, it becomes a more useful book. It pre-eminently represents one side of human nature, and is the literary record of a nation whose influence in history has been second to none. But when we say that God is present in it, it is because there is no literature where He is not present. England, France, and Germany have their Word of God as well as Palestine, and justice is only done to the Bible, when it is treated as a national chapter in the world-book.—(P. 20.)

. . . "Now and then a fresh soul enters the world, in whom the yearnings after God that founded the faiths and built the temples of the multitudes are more intense; his eye looks beyond the symbolic veil on which most are content to rest; it penetrates the holy of holies; he worships the invisible; he is the friend of the Infinite one. . . . Yet even such fresh souls, who are the founders of new religions, are the children of history and the pupils of nature, while they are the Christ of God; and they see eternal realities with national and local colourings. This is the origin of religion itself, and of every special phase. The varieties among men, the varied aspects of nature, the different streams of history, constantly overshadowed by the quickening presence of God, bred the religions that have been and are, and will breed the new developments of the future. And this is also the genesis of Christianity—one phase of the universal aspiration.—(Pp. 21, 22.)

. . . "It may be that the day is approaching when the only miracle will be a believer in miracles. . . . If at any moment the law of gravitation may be suspended, and the bodies of our prophets career in fiery chariots in the air, or ascend to the skies from Galilean mountain peaks, how do we know that in our next morning walk the earth will not throw us from its hitherto protecting breast, and hurl us, unwilling emigrants, to colonize some starry world. If tides, currents, and winds, whose operations may be studied and known, do not govern the movements of the sea, but at human commands waves pile themselves up in walls, and tempests sink to peace, navigation is of no use to the mariner, and the merchant who risks his wealth in ships is mad."—(Pp. 24, 25.)

While Mr. Binns teaches that Jesus is no more Christ than Solon or Socrates was, that the miracles ascribed to him are nothing more than "marvellous legends," and that "the Bible is Hebrew literature, in the same way as the poems, plays, philosophies, and histories of Greece are literature," we cannot find any fault with him. The principles of the Assembly gave perfect license for such

opinions, and we rather admire the plain and manly style in which he gave expression to what, we doubt not, are his honest and deep convictions. He reminds us, in his bold spirit and his frank speech, of Parker, whose devoted disciple he is, and who never sought to speak in ambiguous terms, which to "the advanced" might mean one thing, and to the uninitiated another. That there were some of the ministers present who sympathised with his views we know, though they may have been startled by his plain speech: but that there were many, both ministers and laymen, who entertained no such views, we cannot doubt: and it was a novel scene for an assemblage of ministers of the Lord Jesus to be listening to a sermon in which their Master was virtually and most emphatically denied. According to custom, a resolution was moved and seconded, embodying the best thanks of the meeting to the preacher; but several objected: they were quite willing, out of politeness, to thank the preacher, but they could not consistently give him their "best thanks." How conscientious! We can understand their scruples, but why seek to silence them by such a splitting of straws? It was right for them to feel dissatisfied: it was a humiliating spectacle to witness a company of Christian ministers, under the enslaving yoke of "Free Inquiry," compelled to submit to such teachings, and to acknowledge them as consistent with the principles on which they associated. Their true course would have been to protest against a constitution which licensed such doctrines, and either have adopted a distinctly Christian organization, or dissolved the Assembly.

But this Assembly, so motley in its character,—Christian, half Christian, and Deist,—has missionary work on hands; and, at the late meeting, from several districts reports of missionary labours and successes were submitted. We can understand a Temperance Mission, or an Anti-Slavery Mission, engaged in by men whose religious views are most diverse; but a Christian Mission, conducted by a company of men, some of whom believe in revelation and some not, is a novelty which it remained for the Lancashire and Cheshire Assembly, the assumed representatives, we blush to add, of Matthew and Philip Henry, to exhibit to the world.

It may be said, indeed, that men may be Christians, though they give no authority to Jesus beyond that to which, as a wise and good man, he was entitled. Then, though they may admire him as a Jewish peasant, they cannot believe in him as the Christ, for that term distinctly expresses his divine mission. Such persons hold *Christianity without Christ*, and with them Christianity is simply a belief in an ever-present God, and in the duty of loving him and loving one another. In the rapid progress of religious knowledge, diligently cultivated as it is by our "free inquirers," words are gradually changing their meanings; and when a new edition of Worcester or Webster is to be brought out, we would suggest that new meanings should be given to various terms; thus, "Bigot," as used by the advanced school, might be explained as "one who consistently maintains his conscientious opinions"; "Liberal," "a man who is indifferent to all opinions, whether right or wrong"; and "Christian," "one who believes in a superintending providence, whether or not he has any faith in Christ or in Divine Revelation."

UNITARIANISM *VERSUS* DEISM.

Under this heading there appears, in a recent number of *The London Inquirer*, a letter, intended to furnish a reply to a short article in our last number, entitled, "A Question not Answered," in which it may be remembered that we drew attention to the fact of a request having been made to the editor of *The Inquirer* to state what were, in his mind, the essentials of Unitarianism as distinguished from mere Deism, and also to the significant manner in which the editor had *burked* the inquiry, and prudently left us in ignorance of his views. We are happy to find that our gentle rebuke has accomplished its purpose; and, although the letter which appears in reply is not from the pen of the editor, but from a correspondent who has gallantly stepped forward and attempted to solve a difficult problem, we presume we may receive it as embodying the views of *The Inquirer*, and that large portion of its contributors who, under the plea of "Free Inquiry," seek

to include in the ministry of the Unitarian Church those who acknowledge and those who reject the Christ,—those who believe in the Scriptures as embodying a divine revelation, and those who place them on a level with the literature of Greece and Rome.

The object of *The Inquirer's* correspondent is to exhibit the essential difference between Deism and those latitudinarian views which have latterly been engrafted on Unitarianism; and he seems to make a plausible case by taking a definition of Deism which may suit his purpose. He says—

> "The essential principle of Deism is this, that it dispenses with God in the universe, except as First Cause, and considers all Divine influence disproved, wherever law prevails. This belief in the mechanical theory of the universe at once marks the distinction between the most advanced school of Unitarianism, and the most reverent phase of Deism; for there is no principle more dwelt upon and enforced by Theodore Parker and his disciples than that of the ever-pervading immanence of God in the world of matter and in the spirit of man."

If, for a moment, we grant that this explanation of Deism is correct, though, as we shall presently show, notwithstanding the authority on which he rests it, that it is glaringly false, we get just such an answer as we anticipated, and learn, not to our own surprise, but we doubt not to the amazement of many of our readers, that the leading characteristic of the most advanced School of Unitarianism is a belief "in the ever-pervading immanence of God in the world of matter, and in the spirit of man." Thus all belief in Scripture, in Christ, in a resurrection, and in a life of retribution disappear; and whether men believe them or disbelieve them, they are admissible to the ministry and the management of "our Free Churches." With such persons engaged in the missionary work of the denomination, what is it but a crusade against the Bible and against that Christ to whose doctrine and mission the Bible testifies; and an effort to prove—what we presume few but Atheists deny—that "the spirit of God is immanent in the world of matter and the spirit of man?"

But the definition to which we are treated of Deism, is utterly incorrect. In the sense given to it in *The Inquirer* it has been rarely used; and, to understand what its true meaning is, we should consult those English writers who

may be regarded as authorities in the matter: and it will be found, wherever we seek its interpretation, whether in Dictionary, Encyclopædia, or in the writings of Christian Divines, that the characteristic idea attached to the word is a *rejection of divine revelation*. Out of a host of authorities, we shall quote only a few:—

"Deism is the belief in natural religion only, or those truths in doctrine and practice which man is to discover by the light of reason, independent and exclusive of any revelation from God."—*Webster*.

Deist—"one who believes in the existence of God, but disbelieves revealed religion."—*Worcester*.

"In common language, Deism is opposed to belief in a revelation; and a Deist is one who holds the existence and providence of God, but grounds his belief on reason and the evidence afforded by the existence of things, and rejects the testimony of revelation."—*Chambers*.

We might add to such proofs, the numerous writings of the apologists of revelation, including in an earlier period, Watson, Lardner, Leland, and Priestly—and more recently, Chalmers and Channing; and it will be found that the arguments of all such writers are directed to prove, not the "immanence of the Spirit of God in matter and mind," but the reasonableness and the truth of the revelation given to the world through Jesus Christ.

It is pleasant to be able to add the authority of *The Unitarian Herald*, which, in its advocacy of freedom, sometimes seems to leave revelation behind, but which recently defines Deism thus:—"*Theist* denotes simply a believer in God, whereas *Deist* denotes a believer in God, *who denies Christ;*" and when, in the next week's *Herald*, the correctness of this definition was questioned, the editors thus repeat, and unanswerably confirm, the explanation they had given.*

There is etymologically no difference between *Theist* and *Deist*—the former a Greek derivative, the latter a Latin one—denote severally one who believes in God. But use, which is the law of speech, if Horace is right, employs the former to designate a believer in God, the latter the same with this difference, that he of whom it is used denies Christ. . . . The *Imperial Dictionary* says—"Theism differs from Deism, for although Deism implies a belief in the existence of God, yet it signifies in modern usage a denial of revelation, which Theism does not."

* *Unitarian Herald*, June 3 and 10.

It would be easy to exhibit, from another point of view, the gross error of the statement, that Deism, "in its most reverent phase," denotes a disbelief in the all-pervading Spirit of God. If we turn to the Deistical writers of the eighteenth century, we shall find that many of them believed as firmly in a providence, and in the universal presence of God's Spirit, as any of our advanced thinkers of the present time. Such men were Tindal, Morgan, and Chubb, the first of whom spoke in the highest terms of the teaching of Jesus, though he entirely rejected his divine mission, and he assumed for himself and his friends the title of "Christian Deists"; and even Thomas Paine wrote in terms of admiration of Christ, as high, we believe, as could be honestly used by our "most advanced School of Unitarians."

The Inquirer's correspondent, having given us a view of Deism utterly erroneous, but yet suited to his purpose, next proceeds to explain Christianity. He represents, under eight distinct heads, the various forms of Christianity which are to be found in our time, beginning with that which the Roman Catholic Church holds, and ending with the following as its two most liberal phases:—

"7. Others are satisfied to receive as a Christian every one who accepts the *actual* teachings of Christ, and who receives him as his moral Lord and Master.

"8. Whilst a few, more liberal still, have not withheld the Christian name from any one who accepts what he *believes* to have been the teachings of Christ, whom he regards as his Master."

There is here a needless multiplying of classes, for a little reflection will show that the two paragraphs we have just quoted represent one and the same party. There can be no distinction in the mind of any one, between what Christ *actually* taught, and what he *believes* him to have taught; for what a man believes to have been the actual teachings of Christ must be what he believes him to have taught. But while one class is thus foolishly divided into two, by a strange omission the disciples of Theodore Parker are altogether excluded; for surely it must have been known to the writer, and if not, we now beg to inform him, that this eminent man (to whose writings some of the Unitarian ministers of England attribute their conversion from unbelief!) dis-

tinctly declares of Christ—"He that was greater than the temple, whose soul burst out its walls, is also greater than the Testament, but yet *no master over me or you*, however humble men."

Then it would appear—for we know that *The Inquirer's* correspondent includes Parker and his disciples in the Unitarian denomination, and so do some Unitarian Societies—that every minister of religion is to be ranked in our denomination, and to be admitted into its pulpits, who accepts what he believes to be Christ's teachings, whether he receives him as his Master or not. He may believe that Christ had no authority or power from God, that the New Testament narrative is a bundle of legends, that the resurrection of our Lord is a fable, that much which he is represented as teaching, he never taught—that he only really taught what other wise and good men, guided by the light of nature, had taught before him, and yet he may fairly claim the Christian name! Such is the view which is maintained in *The Inquirer*, and it affords a plain answer to the question which we proposed, and confirms our worst suspicions—that between the theological views advocated by the Deistical writers of a past age, and those held by the most advanced School of Unitarians in our own time, there is no essential distinction. We have exposed the ungenerous effort to make many of those opponents of Christianity worse than they were; they simply rejected a divine revelation, as some of those who now claim the Christian name are ready to do. The ingenuity of the correspondent of *The Inquirer* in getting rid of everything peculiar to revelation, and yet holding by the profession of revealed religion, would seem to us admirably to qualify him for writing a treatise on the Christian religion for men of weak faith, removing everything of the supernatural, and bringing it down to the taste of the most sceptical. Such a treatise might be entitled "Christianity Made Easy," and would form a suitable companion volume to Tindal's "Christianity as Old as the Creation."

The writer whose letter we have been examining, contends that we have "no right to deny the name of Christian to another who desires to be known by that name, unless it can be proved that he assumes it maliciously, or

for the purpose of deception." Of malice we readily acquit those who unjustly take that honourable name, but not of deception. The very name of *Christ* implies the divine appointment of the Saviour, and *Christian* signifies a believer in the Christ: but when we interrogate one of "the advanced school" respecting their belief, it turns out that they place no faith in the Scriptures, one of them alleging that we might as well use any other good book as the Bible in our pulpits,—that they have no belief in anything supernatural in the mission or doctrine of Jesus; in short, that they do not believe him to be the Christ at all. Or if, in a sense, they accept Jesus as the Christ, it is in a sense of their own, as Parker, in one of his prayers, speaks of the children that bless our homes as so many "little Christs"! We advocate the widest latitude for free inquiry: those who taunt us with bigotry are not more liberal: but with freedom we desire consistency: and it is thoroughly inconsistent for those who admit and those who deny the divine authority of revelation to combine for the spread of the Gospel. Light and darkness, heat and cold, are not more opposed. Men have the liberty to call themselves by any name. The man who, in Parliament, continually votes with the Conservative party, may call himself a Liberal; the man who advocates the establishment of a Confederate Nationality, with slavery as its corner-stone, may call himself an Abolitionist; the man who habitually drinks may call himself a Teetotaller, and, as he staggers home from his debauchery, may amuse the lookers on by calling out, in half-articulated sentences, "I am a member of the Temperance Society;" and so the man who has no more faith in the mission of Jesus than in that of Plato, and who denies all Revelation, may call himself a Christian. But while such men have the liberty to assume any name, no matter how inconsistent, others claim an equal liberty to criticise their opinions, and expose the absurdity of their professions.

CORRESPONDENCE OF MR. JAMES HERON WITH THE EDITOR.

[The following correspondence, as may be seen by the extract in the first letter, arose out of a paragraph in an article in the June number of *The Christian Unitarian*, in which we commented severely on the conduct of Mr. James Heron and Mr. James Andrews in going to Ballymoney, while the Remonstrant Congregation there was vacant, demanding to inspect the title deeds of the Congregational property, and threatening the people with legal proceedings and the loss of their Meeting-house, if they allowed the Presbytery to ask the minister-elect a single question. —Ed. Ch. Un.]

Belfast, *15th June*, 1864.

Dear Sir,—My attention has been called to the following observations which appear in the June number of *The Christian Unitarian*, and which are authenticated by your signature :—

"Matters have come to a melancholy state in our Church, when Mr. James Heron and Mr. James Andrews assume the office of 'watchmen in Zion'—guardians of the Christian rights of the people. What will our fellow-Christians of other Churches think of us when they learn that such men are recognized by any section of the Non-Subscribing denomination as prominent leaders, and are put forward to dictate what means a Christian people should take to ascertain the qualification of the candidate whom they would select as their pastor ?"

Will you be good enough to inform me in what respect I am disqualified to take part, either as a leader or a follower, in any matter which I may conceive to be essential to the maintenance, integrity, or Christian rights of the Irish Non-Subscribing Church ?

I abstain from commenting upon the taste and propriety of your thus introducing into the discussion of questions of pure controversy, attacks upon individual and private character; yet I must be permitted to say, that I think it not only unfair, but reprehensible, that you should publicly assail me in this way, without distinctly expressing what you consider so disreputable in my conduct or opinions.—I remain, yours very truly,

James Heron.

Rev. C. J. M'Alester,
Editor of *The Christian Unitarian*.

Holywood, *June 16*, 1864.

Dear Sir,—In reply to your letter, referring to a paragraph in the June number of *The Christian Unitarian*, I beg to say, that your interference in the affairs of the Ballymoney Congregation, in my mind, justly exposed you to severe censure. While I entertain very decidedly the opinion I expressed respecting your unfitness to be a leader (I did not say a follower), in the Non-Subscribing Church, you are surely not serious in expecting that I shall enter into any discussion with you respecting the grounds of that opinion; and you will not consider me more to be blamed in

attaching my signature to any thing I have written, than they are who assail their friends anonymously.—I am, dear Sir, yours truly,

James Heron, Esq. C. J. M'ALESTER.

BELFAST, 16*th June*, 1864.

DEAR SIR,—I must say that your reply to my communication of yesterday is most unsatisfactory. In a periodical that circulates amongst the denomination, you, as its Editor, thought proper to hold me up as unworthy of the confidence of *any section* of the Non-Subscribing Church, and you further conveyed that my connection was calculated to degrade the Body in the estimation "of our fellow-Christians of other Churches." It is plain that you here insinuate, as my disqualification, something affecting my private character, since it is notorious that, in a religious point of view, all the members of the Unitarian faith stand equally condemned by the orthodox world. It can be no justification for your imputations on my private character to say that you disapprove of my public conduct, which I admit to be a subject for *fair* criticism; but it is unjustifiable to assail me in language that unmistakeably implies moral delinquency, and then excuse yourself under the plea of criticising my public acts.

I have, therefore, again to request that you will either withdraw these imputations, or else state plainly in what consists my disqualifications for taking part in anything which I may deem essential to the welfare of the Irish Non-Subscribing Church.—I remain, yours very truly.

Rev. C. J. M'Alester., &c. JAMES HERON.

HOLYWOOD, *June* 16, 1864.

DEAR SIR,—As it appears from your note, just received, that you suppose me to have thrown out imputations against your private character, I think it right to inform you that I have not done so. With your private character I have nothing to do in my capacity as Editor of *The Christian Unitarian*. It is your well-known and often-expressed Deistical opinions which, in my mind, entirely disqualify you to be a leader in any section of a Church which takes the Scriptures as its rule of faith.—I am, dear Sir, yours truly,

James Heron, Esq. C. J. M'ALESTER.

BELFAST, 17*th June*, 1864.

DEAR SIR,—I regret that, in the first instance, you did not state explicitly, as you now do, that it was my religious views which constituted my disqualification to take part in the business of the Non-Subscribing Church.

You say that my opinions are "Deistical, well-known, and often-expressed." I am not aware of having either written or spoken anything calculated to lead others to form such a conclusion, and I cannot reconcile the fact of your own recent concurrence in my public nomination and appointment as a member, with yourself, of the standing Committee of "The Irish Non-Subscribing Association," with your professed knowledge of my well-known and often-expressed Deistical opinions.

My opinions are not Deistical; and I hold it to be unfair for you to raise against me the *odium theologicum* cry of infidelity, without advancing any proof whatever, merely because I may not be a Christian according to your narrow standard.

I must still ask you to withdraw the imputation, and unless you have some new ground of disqualification, I require you to retract what you have publicly stated, and admit my right to take part in the affairs of the Non-Subscribing Church.—I remain, yours truly,

Rev. C. J. M'Alester, &c. JAMES HERON.

HOLYWOOD, *June* 18, 1864.

DEAR SIR,—I must express my high gratification at learning, by your note received this morning, that your opinions are not Deistical. It is immaterial whether they have recently undergone any change, or whether for many years public rumour has misrepresented, and intimate friends have misunderstood you; and I shall only be too happy to state, in the next number of *The Christian Unitarian*, in reference to the paragraph which has led to our correspondence, that I wrote under the impression that Mr. Heron did not acknowledge the Scriptures as his rule of faith; but having since learned from him that he does, I am happy to put him and myself right with my readers.

You do me injustice in supposing that my views of Christianity are narrow: compared with those which are most prevalent, I think they are broad; but I freely admit that recently opinions have been called Christian which are so broad as to lose everything of a distinctly Christian character.

I beg to inform you that I did not concur in your appointment as a member of the Committee of the Non-Subscribing Association. When I heard of it, I regarded it as most injudicious on the part of your friends; but even had I been present, any objection on my part would only have increased the tumultuous character of the latter part of the proceedings.—Yours truly,

James Heron, Esq. C. J. M'ALESTER.

BELFAST, 20*th June*, 1864.

DEAR SIR,—This morning I received yours of the 18th instant, and in reply beg to state that you are not authorized to make any representation of my religious opinions in *The Christian Unitarian*, beyond what I have already stated.

By your own acknowledgement, you wrote the paragraph in question under a misapprehension derived from vague rumours, and I have a right to its withdrawal, without imposing on me the acceptance of your interpretations of Christian truth, as a condition of such retractation.—Yours truly,

Rev. C. J. M'Alester, &c. JAMES HERON.

HOLYWOOD, *June* 20, 1864.

DEAR SIR,—In reply to your note of to-day, I have to inform you that I wrote the paragraph to which you object in *The Christian Unitarian*, in the belief, founded on much more than "vague rumour" that your opinions were Deistical. You have

explicitly informed me that they are not so, and have led me to suppose that you acknowledge the divine authority of Revelation. I shall, therefore, if you approve, most cheerfully publish such an explanatory note as I proposed, which certainly does not impose on you my interpretations of Christian truth. I cannot farther retract what I have written.—Yours truly,

James Heron, Esq. C. J. M'ALESTER.

BELFAST, 21*st June*, 1864.

DEAR SIR,—I see by your letter of yesterday that you refuse to retract unconditionally the offensive paragraph in the last *Christian Unitarian*. You now go off from the subject, and wish to raise an issue as to the views I hold respecting "the divine authority of the Scriptures"—a wide subject, upon which there exists great diversity of opinion, and upon which you and I would not likely agree.

If you still refuse to apologize, after I have explicitly told you that the information upon which you profess to have based your statements is not correct, I shall feel myself at liberty to take other means to expose the unfair and unwarrantable nature of your attack.—I remain, yours very truly,

Rev. C. J. M'Alester, &c. JAMES HERON.

HOLYWOOD, *June* 22, 1864.

DEAR SIR,—You are under a great mistake in supposing that I wish to raise an issue as to the views you hold respecting the divine authority of the Scriptures, of which I said nothing, or even of revelation, to which I did refer. I have no such desire. When you informed me that your opinions were not Deistical, as I had strong reason to believe they were, I gladly accepted your statement, and at once agreed to write a paragraph in next *Christian Unitarian*, stating that I had written under the impression that you did not acknowledge the Scriptures as your rule of faith, but that I had since learned from you that you did, and that I was happy to put you and myself right with my readers. What else, under the circumstances, could I understand by your disclaiming Deism? I could not suppose that you were a Jew,—or a Mohammedan,—much less a Pantheist or an Atheist. I did not impose on you my interpretations of Christian truth; and if your not being Deistical in your opinions does not imply that you thus regard the Scriptures, you are entirely unfitted, not only to be a leader, but to take any part whatever in our Non-Subscribing Church. Should my proposal still fail to satisfy you, you are at perfect liberty to take any course in reference to the matter which you may think right.—Yours very truly,

James Heron, Esq. C. J. M'ALESTER.

BELFAST, 23*rd June*, 1864.

DEAR SIR,—Notwithstanding the determination expressed in your letter of yesterday's date, not to retract what you have written, I think you are bound to state in the next *Christian Unitarian* the facts as elicited by this correspondence, viz., that I complained of your attack as unfair, and that the language was so ambiguous as to convey imputations upon my private character; that you ex-

plained it was my religious opinions you impugned; that I denied I was a Deist, which disclaimer you disbelieve, unless you are authorized to state further that I acknowledge what you term "the divine authority of Revelation." This very vague proposition, subject to such wide interpretation, I have not felt called upon either to affirm or to deny. Let these facts go to the public, and I am content to abide their verdict.

It is evident to me, from the whole drift of your letters, however you may try to conceal it, that your prepossessions have misled you into the most uncharitable error of making the acknowledgment of the Bible, as containing infallible oracles of truth, the test of Christian discipleship. This presumptuous conceit, which would unchristianize some of the best divines and ablest scholars of the age, shows such a narrowness of Christian sentiment, and such an entire disregard of conclusions established beyond the reach of all rational controversy, as must excite only a feeling of pity for those who assume such exclusiveness towards men who, in all respects, are as good Christians as themselves. I am satisfied that neither my friends in the Unitarian Church, nor my fellow-Christians of other Churches, are likely, in the slightest degree, to be influenced by your opinion of my fitness or unfitness to be connected with the Non-Subscribing Body; and you will excuse me for saying that I shall not look upon your expression of disqualification as any hindrance to my continued exertions to advance still further the Christian liberty and independence of the denomination in Ireland.—I remain yours truly,

Rev. C. J. M'Alester, &c. JAMES HERON.

HOLYWOOD, *June* 24, 1864.

DEAR SIR,—The representation which you give of the result of our correspondence, I am not prepared to accept as exhibiting the facts that have been elicited; but, if you desire, I shall most willingly publish the correspondence *in extenso:* the whole case will thus be most fairly presented, and the fullest justice done both to you and to myself.

You have every right to pursue whatever course you may think proper in religious matters: but any one who takes a prominent part in such affairs may expect to have his conduct freely criticised.—I am, dear Sir, yours truly,

James Heron, Esq. C. J. M'ALESTER.

P.S.—Should you approve of the publishing of our correspondence, I fear I could not give it in the coming number of *The Christian Unitarian*, as it is nearly made up, but I would insert a notice stating that it would appear in next number.

C. J. M'A.

BELFAST, 24*th June*, 1864.

DEAR SIR,—Your proposal to publish the correspondence *in extenso*, is quite satisfactory. Whether or not you should accompany its publication with any expression of regret for the injustice originally done me is a matter for your own consideration.—Yours truly,

Rev. C. J. M'Alester, &c. JAMES HERON.

INTELLIGENCE.

IRISH UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN SOCIETY.

On Sunday, May 29, the annual sermons in connexion with this society were preached by the Rev. Thomas Hincks, of Leeds, at noon, in Stephen's Green Church, from 1 Peter xii. 16, and in the evening, in Eustace Street Church, from Mark vi. 34. On the following Tuesday evening, a social meeting of the members and friends of the Society was held in the spacious School-rooms in the basement storey of Stephen's Green Church. In the unavoidable absence of the president, Mr. Murland, the chair was occupied by Mr. James Haughton, who addressed the meeting at considerable length on the principles of the Society, and on the evils of slavery, war, and intemperance. "The Dissemination of Unitarian Christianity," was responded to by the Rev. D. D. Jeremy. Mr. Andrew M. Porter, barrister-at-law, in eloquent terms moved a vote of thanks to the Rev. T. Hincks for his valuable services on the preceding Sunday. Mr. Hincks, in responding, dwelt on the claim which there was on their church for missionary work,—not a mere sectarian propagandism—a theological crusade,—but a ministry in the Spirit of Christ to deep and urgent religious wants. Mr. J. B. Falconer moved a vote of thanks to the choir, by whom the proceedings of the meeting had been agreeably diversified, and the National Anthem terminated the proceedings.

PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY OF LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE.

On June 16, the annual meeting of this Assembly was held at Altrincham. The attendance was good. The Rev. J. T. Whitehead conducted the devotional services, and the sermon was preached by the Rev. W. Binns from 1 Cor. x. 15—"I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say." [The sermon was reported to be very "advanced" in its theological views, advocating the extreme of Parkerism, and its subsequent publication more than confirms all that was reported of it.] A collection towards the missionary operations of the Assembly was made at the close of the service. The business meeting was then held,—the Rev. A. M. Creery in the chair. The Secretary, Mr. Whitehead, read a report in reference to changes in the roll of the Assembly during the past year. The Rev. T. E. Poynting moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Whitehead for his introductory services, and to Mr. Binns for his sermon. In thanking the preacher, the Assembly did not necessarily endorse his views: they expected him to speak his own views, and not theirs. Mr. Binns had used what all must concede as his legitimate right in addressing them. They came there bound by no dogmatic bonds, and therefore no dogmatic bonds had Mr. Binns violated. He had spoken out thoughts which were passing in many minds, especially among the younger members of our laity, and thoughts which ministers, at no distant time, would have to look boldly in the face. It might be useful therefore to have these thoughts set before them. He moved that the best thanks of the assembly be given to the preacher and to the supporter. Mr. R.

D. Darbishire heartily seconded the motion, and without any qualification, which seemed to him uncalled for. The preacher had not offended him; on the contrary, he was glad to hear boldly stated that which all who dared to face the obligations of religious teaching without subscription of any kind, must face in these days of progress and science. The preacher, he thought, led them safely through his difficulties, and He who gave the increase in knowledge would also bless it. The Rev. H. Green observed that it was a very ungenerous task to propose an amendment, but he could not, in justice to himself as the minister of a Christian congregation, allow the resolution to pass without protesting against the use of one word. Speaking for himself, never in any discourse that he had listened to did he find his own convictions so thoroughly opposed as they were that morning. While he was willing to receive light and truth from beyond the body of revealed religion contained in the Old and New Testament, he could not join in the expression "best thanks." He would therefore propose that the word "best" in the thanks be omitted. Mr. H. Coppock seconded the amendment. He had been asked outside what he thought of the sermon, and his reply was that he never knew one more inopportune. The Rev. C. Beard said he would take his stand on the right of free speech. What they thanked a preacher for was, his having selected his subject, worked it out, and then courageously spoken the whole truth as God had given it to him. He did not understand the distinction between "thanks" and "best thanks." He besought them to take care how they erected themselves into a tribunal to judge of doctrines. Several other members spoke, and the discussion was for some time of a stormy character; but at length, on the understanding that the Assembly did not by its "best thanks" express approbation of the doctrine of the sermon, the amendment was withdrawn, and a vote of "best thanks" was passed.

Mr. T. Avison read the treasurer's report, as also the report of the committee, which detailed the missionary operations of the various District Associations, and was highly satisfactory. The missionary committee for the ensuing year was then appointed, and also a committee on ministers' salaries. At three o'clock, about 150 ladies and gentlemen dined together, Robert Worthington, Esq., presiding. "Civil and Religious Liberty," "The Provincial Assembly," "Manchester New College," and "The Home Missionary Board," were spoken to by Rev. C. Beard, Rev. T. Poynting, Mr. R. D. Darbishire, and Rev. R. L. Carpenter.

PRESENTATION TO THE REV. DR. BEARD.

On Monday evening, June 20, about 250 ladies and gentlemen met in the school room connected with the Strangeways Unitarian Chapel, Manchester. The object of their meeting was to make a presentation to the Rev. Dr. Beard on the occasion of his retiring from the ministry of the chapel. On the previous Sunday he preached his farewell sermon, from Mark xiii. 28—31, to a large congregation. After tea, Mr. John Ashton was moved to the chair, and appropriately introduced the business of the evening. Mr. Alderman Mackie next addressed the meeting, dwelling on the zealous and constant labours of Dr. Beard for so many years

for the dissemination of Unitarianism. Mr. W. Talbot, the Chapel-warden, read a feeling address, which had been prepared and neatly engrossed on vellum, illuminated, and on mounted rollers. Mr. Mackie then, in the name of the subscribers, every one of whom either was or had been a member of the congregation, presented Dr. Beard with the address, and a purse of £200. Dr. Beard replied in a lengthened speech, in which he gave some interesting details of his early life, and his exertions in establishing the Home Missionary Board. Mr. John Armstrong, Mr. T. Cook, Mr. W. Moss, and the Rev. J. Drummond, afterwards spoke. During the evening Miss Sarah Armstrong, Mr. T. Rawson, and the Chapel Choir performed several pieces of music.

On the following evening, about 400 scholars, teachers, and friends met in the school-room, and presented Mrs. Beard with a kind address, accompanied with a silver-plated tea kettle, on her resignation as a teacher in the Sunday-School. The address was signed by 53 teachers and 110 scholars.

PRESENTATION TO THE REV. R. B. ASPLAND.

On June 22, a number of the friends of the Rev. R. B. Aspland met in the library of the University Hall, Gordon Square, for the purpose of presenting him with a token of their respect on his retiring from the editorship of the *Christian Reformer*. There was a large attendance of friends, both lay and clerical. M. Phillips, Esq., was moved to the chair, and in handsome terms introduced the business of the meeting. The presentation consisted of a salver, which, with other articles of plate, cost 200 guineas, and bore the following inscription:—

"To the Rev. Robert Brook Aspland, on his retirement from the editorship of the *Christian Reformer*, which for nearly twenty years had been conducted by him, as by his honoured father before him, in a spirit of fairness to all parties; this salver, together with an epergne and tea and coffee service, and £600, is presented by his numerous friends as a memorial of his long and unrequited labours in the cause of Christian truth and freedom, and as an expression of their personal regard. 1864."

ORDINATION AT NEWTOWNLIMAVADY.

On Friday, the 24th June, the Remonstrant Presbytery of Templepatrick met at Newtownlimavady, for the purpose of ordaining the Rev. Abraham Lunn, of Chorley, Lancashire, who had received and accepted a unanimous call from the Remonstrant Congregation in that place, vacant by the resignation of Mr. Napier, now settled in Ballymoney. Mr. Lunn is a son of the late Rev. James Lunn of Carlingford, and received his collegiate education in Belfast. He had been engaged for a considerable time as a minister amongst the Unitarians of England, but had not previously received the form of ordination necessary for admission into the Presbyterian Church.

The Rev. Robert Cleland, of Crumlin, introduced the services, and preached from Luke xxiv. 32. The customary discourse, in explanation of Presbyterian Ordination, was delivered by the Rev. John A.

Crozier, of Ballymena, who concluded this part of the service by an outline and explanation of the course pursued by the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster, in relation to the ordination and installation of its ministers, and of the requirements necessary on that occasion, in accordance with the established laws of the Remonstrant Church.

The Congregation and the candidate having then respectively signified their adherence to, and acceptance of, the call, the prescribed questions were answered by Mr. Lunn in the affirmative; and the members of Presbytery having individually expressed their satisfaction, he was then ordained to the office of the Christian ministry in the usual manner, by prayer and the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery; afterwards receiving "the right hand of fellowship" from his brethren of the Presbytery, and the congratulations of the Congregation. The proceedings were brought to a conclusion by a brief but most impressive and affecting charge to the minister and people, given by the Rev. William Napier, of Ballymoney, the former minister of the Congregation.

Mr. Lunn and the Presbytery were afterwards entertained by the Congregation, J. Alexander, Esq., occupying the chair. After dinner, the Chairman proposed, in the kindest manner, "The Health of the New Minister," to which Mr. Lunn made an appropriate reply. Several other toasts were given and responded to, and the company separated; the proceedings of the day having been marked by the most perfect unanimity and good will.

MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE NON-SUBSCRIBING ASSOCIATION.

At a meeting of this Committee, held in the vestry of the Second Meeting-House, Belfast, on the 25th ult., the President, the Rev. J. S. Porter, in the chair, Messrs. James Mulligan and James Kennedy were examined in Latin and Greek, and in Roman History. Their answering was most satisfactory, and afforded gratifying evidence not only of their own ability and perseverance, but also of the careful and accurate instruction they had received from the Rev. J. Callwell, under whom they had studied.

OBITUARY.

Died, on June 30, at her residence, Market Square, Lisburn, Mary, relict of the late George Major, Esq.

Died, on July 4, at Lissara, James Bingham, Esq., of Huddersfield.

Died, at Bridport, Dorsetshire, on the 19th ult., Joseph Hounsell, Esq., aged 75. Happily there are to be found in every communion, humble imitators of our Saviour in devotion to duty and in the application of Christian principle to the conduct and habits of life. Such an one was the subject of this obituary—a man who was never satisfied unless he fulfilled to the extent of his power "all righteousness." "His life was Christ: death his gain."

THE

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RENAN'S LIFE OF JESUS.

(*Concluded from p.* 226.)

WE are now approaching the close of our remarks on this volume. We have assigned to its examination a wide space, much wider than some may think necessary. We have deliberately done so, because we wished our readers to understand clearly the drift and object of the work, the claims which it has upon their consideration, and the qualities by which it has been able to command so large a share of the public attention. More formidable attacks undoubtedly have been made upon the doctrines of Christianity; but few have secured so much popularity on their first appearance: and it seems to us that our little Magazine would imperfectly fulfil its duty, if it passed over unnoticed, or with slight mention, a book of which the name and fame are in the mouths of so many persons, not only on the continent, where it has excited an immense interest, but also in the United Kingdom. There are a few points remaining on which we wish to offer one or two observations before concluding our remarks.

The first is one which is truly creditable to M. Renan, because it shews that his infidelity has not blinded his perceptions to the great facts of history. We allude to the light in which he views the services that our Blessed Saviour has performed to the great interests of humanity. This indeed is a topic to which he frequently recurs; so frequently that it is hard to choose a passage to produce as a specimen of the whole: but the following will serve for a sample. Talking of the advent, he says:—

"In Judea expectation was at its height. Holy persons, among whom are specified an aged Simeon whom legend describes as holding Jesus in his arms, and Anna the daughter of Phanuel, who

was regarded as a prophetess, passed their lives around the temple, fasting and praying that it might please God not to withdraw them from the world till they had seen the fulfilment of the hopes of Israel. A mighty incubation is felt: the approach of something unparalleled. This confused mixture of bright views and of dreams, this alternation of deceptions and of hopes, these aspirations continually repressed by a hateful reality, at length found their interpreter in the incomparable man *to whom the universal conscience has decreed the title of the Son of God; and with justice, since he has caused religion to make a step in advance to which none other is, and probably none ever will be, capable of being compared.*"—(P. 18.)

This is far from being a solitary passage. The following, though disfigured by the introduction of Simeon, Hillel, and other rabbis, whose shades haunt the memory of M. Renan, is equally fervent and appropriate. After a brief reference to the sentiments of Isaiah and other prophets respecting the comparative worthlessness of ceremonial, as distinguished from moral excellence, he says:—

"In later times Simeon the Just, Jesus the son of Sirach, Hillel, and other doctors, almost hit the mark, and declared that righteousness was the sum of the law. Philo, in the Judæo-Egyptian world, arrived, at the same time with Jesus, at ideas of a high moral sanctity, the result of which was to undervalue legal observances. Shemaia and Abtalion, also, more than once shewed themselves very liberal casuists. Rabbi Johanan was soon to place works of mercy even above the study of the law. *Nevertheless, Jesus alone spoke the word effectually.* Never has there been one who was less the priest than Jesus; never was one who was more the enemy of forms which smother religion under pretence of protecting it. It is in consequence of this that we are all his disciples and successors. *It is thus that he has laid an eternal stone, the foundation of true religion; and if religion is the essential thing for humanity, he has thereby deserved the divine rank which has been assigned him.* An idea absolutely new, the idea of a worship founded upon purity of heart and upon human brotherhood, gained through him an entrance into the world—an idea so elevated that the Christian church in after times was destined completely to betray his intentions, and that in our own days, a few souls only are capable of embracing it."—(P. 90.)

To the same effect we read a few pages further on:—

"Jesus the son of Sirach, and Hillel, had uttered maxims almost as elevated as those of Jesus. Nevertheless, Hillel will never pass for the true founder of Christianity. In morals as in art, to say is nothing; to do is everything. The idea which is hidden under a picture of Raphael matters little: it is the picture that is of consequence. Even so in morals; truth has no value if it does not pass

into the state of feeling; and it only gains its highest worth when it is realized in the state of action. Men of very ordinary morality have written good maxims. Very virtuous men on the other hand have done nothing to prolong the succession of virtue in the world. *The palm is due to him who has been mighty in words and deeds; who has felt the good, and who, at the price of his own blood, has made it triumph.*"—(Pp. 92, 93.)

Many such passages are scattered up and down in this *Life of Jesus*. We do not concur in every sentiment contained in those which we have translated above. We have already protested against the monotonous reiteration with which the author drags in Hillel and the rabbis, Philo and the Talmudists. Any one who has examined the literary history of the Jews, knows that we know next to nothing of Hillel or his teachings; and any one who is acquainted with Philo and the Talmud, knows very well that there are plenty of passages in both which may be placed in juxtaposition with certain sayings of Christ, and which bear to them a resemblance more or less striking; but he knows, also, that these are, compared with the bulk of those writings, mere detached expressions, "*rari nantes in gurgite vasto.*" The vague conceptions, the far-fetched allegories, the feeble attempts at reasoning in the Alexandrian Platonist—the silly traditions, the old-womanish minutiæ, the absurd criticisms of the Talmudists—disgust every reader of taste, and render a continuous perusal of either the dreariest of all intellectual tasks. Could either of them have reformed and regenerated a world? No; ten thousand such as they might have plied their pens for ages without producing any perceptible improvement in the inhabitants of a single village or a single street. It is not right in M. Renan to parade their names, and those of Sakya-Mouni, the founder of Buddhism, of St. Francis of Assisi, of St. Bernard, and a few others of the same stamp, continually before his readers, as if they either rivalled the greatness or the usefulness of the Great Master. But leaving this, and other matters of the same sort, aside for the present, we think no one can fail to perceive in the extracts above given, a large, and, we are persuaded, a hearty acknowledgment of the mighty debt which the world owes to Jesus of Nazareth. Consistently with his own opinions, Renan could not ascribe these eminent services to their

true source,—the divine wisdom which enlightened the Saviour's mind and prompted his tongue, and the divine Spirit which filled his breast. But the magnitude of those services themselves he acknowledges with no niggard gratitude. We pass on, then, in the next place, to consider the means by which, in his estimate, Jesus has earned the gratitude of the human family to the end of time; and here we are sorry to find the author's representations pre-eminently unsatisfactory.

Of course, Renan ascribes the benefits which flow from Christ to two principal sources of influence—what he taught and what he was,—in other words, to his doctrine and his life. But when he states his views of each, it is difficult to see what there is in them—as M. Renan regards them,—which could attract the admiration or the grateful homage of mankind, at least with that fervour and intensity which his words imply. As a teacher, he represents him as generally defective, often mistaken; and his character, as Renan views it, is very far from coming up to the standard of attainable perfection. We select one or two points which will illustrate his manner of treating this part of his subject.

Thus, with respect to the doctrine of the resurrection, which Renan identifies with the advent of the kingdom of heaven,—and this, according to him, our Lord expected to appear immediately on earth,—he writes:—

"The Gospels and the Writings of the Apostles scarcely contain anything that is not found already in Daniel, in the Book of Enoch, in the Sybilline Oracles: all of Jewish origin. Jesus accepted the idea already diffused among his contemporaries. He made it the main pillar of his system; or rather one of its main pillars; for he had too profound a feeling of his real work to establish it solely on principles so frail, so liable to receive from facts a crushing refutation.

"It is evident, in fact, that such a doctrine in itself, taken in a literal sense, could not be lasting; the world, by continuing to exist, made it crumble away. One generation at most was its limit. After the death of John, or of the last survivor of the group which had seen the Master, the word of the latter was convicted of falsehood (*convaincue de mensonge*). If the doctrine of Jesus had been no more than belief in the near approach of the end of the world, it would undoubtedly be now sleeping in oblivion. What then has saved it? The vast breadth of the evangelic conceptions, which allowed doctrines suitable to very different intellectual states to be found under the same symbol. The world has

not come to an end, as Jesus announced, and as his disciples believed it would. But it has been renewed, and in one sense renewed as Jesus wished. It is because it wore two faces that his word has been so prolific. His chimera has not had the fate of so many others which have crossed the human mind, because it contained a living germ, which, being introduced into the bosom of humanity by means of a fabulous integument, has borne eternal fruits. . . . Let us forgive him for his hope of a vain apocalypse, of an advent in triumph upon the clouds of heaven. Perhaps it was the error of others rather than his own. And if he shared the illusions of all, what matter, since his dream fortified him against death, and supported him in a struggle to which, perhaps, he would have been unequal without it! . . . In accepting the utopias of his time and of his race, Jesus was able to convert them into high truths, thanks to prolific misapprehensions. His kingdom of God was, beyond a doubt, the approaching apocalypse which was soon to unfold itself in the sky. But it was, also, and probably chiefly, the kingdom of the soul, created by liberty and the filial emotion which the virtuous man feels while resting on the bosom of his father. It was pure religion, without observances, without temple, without priest: the moral judgment of the world, pronounced to the conscience of the religious man, and to the arms of the people. . . . The portion of truth contained in the thought of Jesus has prevailed over the chimera which obscured it."—(Pp. 281—285.)

Thus, if the world gets any good from the teaching of Jesus on this subject, it arises from a happy *double-entendre* in his words. It is because the world understands in one sense what he meant in another; and puts a prolific, but mistaken meaning on his dreams, his utopias, his illusions, his chimeras,—dreams and chimeras which time has convicted of falsehood, to which it has given the lie *(dementi)*. But Renan is very condescending to the weakness which he exposes. "Let us not despise," he says, "this chimera, which has been the coarse integument of the sacred bulb on which we live," &c. "Let us pardon this vain hope of an apocalypse," &c. We cannot but think that open scorn would have been less offensive than this contemptuous pity. There is to us something inexpressibly disgusting in hearing such a man as Renan asking his readers to pardon Jesus Christ for his errors and misconceptions,—errors, moreover, and misconceptions into which every person who is acquainted with the New Testament knows that he never fell.

But it is M. Renan's continual habit to pervert the meaning of Christ's teaching in the most self-convicting

manner, so as to make the Great Teacher say what he never meant, and teach things that he never inculcated. After doing so, he comes forward to throw his patronizing shield of protection before him, to urge flimsy excuses for the weakness which he falsely imputes to the Saviour, and beg us kindly to overlook his ignorance,—ignorance which he never betrayed. We might adduce the whole of the 19th Chapter as an illustration of this remark; but as we wish to be brief, we only offer the following sentences by way of specimen :—

"It is clear that such a religious society, founded solely on the expectation of the kingdom of God, must have been in itself very incomplete. The first Christian generation lived entirely on expectations and dreams. On the eve of seeing the end of the world, everything that only serves to continue the world was regarded as useless. *Property was prohibited* (!!) Everything that attaches man to earth, or turns him away from heaven, was to be shunned. Though several disciples were married, *no marriages took place, it seems* (!!!) after entering into the sect. *Celibacy was naturally preferred;* and even in the married state, continency was recommended. Once *the Master appears to approve those who mutilated themselves* for the sake of the kingdom of God; and therein he was consistent with his own principle,—'If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee,'" &c. &c.

Nothing is easier than this sort of misrepresentation. It is only necessary to lay down two principles, and adhere to them; *first*, that Jesus was destitute of common sense; and *secondly*, that a critic is at liberty to confound the limits of rhetoric and logic. Whenever Jesus makes use of a bold figure of speech, *interpret it strictly according to the rigour of the letter*, and the thing is done. Renan is not the discoverer of this principle of interpretation. It has been noted and commented on by scores, perhaps hundreds of expositors and theologians. Among the rest, Archdeacon Paley has remarked upon it. He says, "I can imagine a hundred cases in which it might appear possible for an honest inquirer to be misled by such precepts as that of cutting off a right hand or plucking out a right eye; but," he adds, "I have never yet met with any man who was so misled." Here, however, we find a man who claims attention as a scholar and a theologian, not indeed falling into that mistake himself, but arguing that Jesus, whom he calls "the regenerator of the world," he who for his great services to our race, "is justly called

the Son of God" (*see the extract from* p. 92 *already given*), fell into it himself, and laid it down as a rule of life for his disciples!

This is a very disagreeable phase of Renan's book. We leave it without regret, and proceed to another branch of the subject,—namely, what he teaches respecting the positive institutions of the Gospel. Here, also, we shall be brief, selecting, by way of example, the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, which will sufficiently shew the reckless spirit in which this celebrated author approaches this part of the evangelic history.

It is the common belief of the Christian world that the Lord's Supper was instituted by our Saviour on the night before he was betrayed; that it was a serious and solemn rite, intended to recall the memory of the founder, and more especially his approaching death; that it consisted of bread and wine, the former representing his body, the latter his blood. Most readers imagine that these things are plainly expressed in the New Testament; and in fact we are not aware that any one has deliberately called in question the fact that they are directly asserted by the evangelists. Nor, to do M. Renan justice, does he deny that these facts are recorded in the first three Gospels; he only contends that the writers of these narratives were mistaken in every one of the points above specified. The Lord's Supper, according to him, was not instituted at Jerusalem, nor on the eve of the crucifixion; on the contrary, it had been in use for a considerable time before the Saviour's passion. It was not observed by the disciples in succeeding times in commemoration of the sad scene of Golgotha, but in memory of the many pleasant banquets of which he and they had partaken together in Galilee. And an essential part of the entertainment consisted of *fish*, which was always produced on such occasions, though the evangelists have forgotten to mention it, and indeed could not have introduced the mention of it consistently with their own mistaken notion that the rite was first observed in Jerusalem, and was intended to have reference to the crucifixion. But it is fair to let this new evangelist speak for himself:—

"It may be asked, had not the new sect some sacrament, some ritual observance, some rallying sign? It had; one which all

traditions carry back to the time of Jesus. One of the favourite ideas of the Master was that he was the new bread, far superior to the ancient manna; the bread on which humanity was to live. This idea, the germ of the eucharist, assumed at times, in his mouth, forms singularly concrete. Once, especially, in the synagogue at Capernaum, he gave way to a bold movement, which cost him several of his disciples. 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, it is not Moses, it is my Father who has given you bread from heaven,' and he added, 'I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall never hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst.' . . . . The twelve remained faithful notwithstanding this whimsical style of preaching *(cette prédication bizarre.)* Peter in particular seized the opportunity to profess an absolute devotion, and to proclaim once more, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of God.' It is probable that from that time forward, some usage was established in the common repasts of the sect, to which the discourse so ill accepted by the people of Capernaum had reference.* But the apostolic traditions are very divergent, and seemingly have been left incomplete on purpose. The synoptic gospels suppose a single sacramental act, which served as the foundation of the mysterious rite; and they place it at the Last Supper. John, precisely he who has recorded the incident in the synagogue of Capernaum, speaks of no such act, though he relates the incidents of the last supper at great length. Elsewhere we see Jesus recognized by the breaking of bread, as if that had been, to those who had attended upon him, the action which chiefly characterized his person. When he was dead, the form under which he appeared to the affectionate remembrance of his disciples was that of the president of a mystic banquet, holding the bread, blessing it, breaking it, and presenting it to the persons present. It is probable that this was one of his customary acts; and that at such a moment he was particularly loving and tender. An essential circumstance, *the presence of fish upon the table*, (a striking indication, which proves that the observance had its origin on the shores of the lake of Tiberias,) was in itself almost sacramental, and became a necessary part of the images of the sacred festival.

"Repasts had become, in the rising society, some of the sweetest moments. At such moments its members met each other; the Master spoke to everyone, and maintained a conversation full of gaiety and charms. Jesus enjoyed such occasions, and took pleasure in seeing his spiritual family thus grouped around him. . . . . This mysterious rite obtained a great importance during the life of Jesus. It was probably established a very long time before the last journey to Jerusalem; and it was the result of a general doctrine far more than of a definite act. After the death of Jesus it became the grand symbol of the Christian community, and its establishment was referred to the most solemn moment in the life of Christ. Christians wished to see, in the consecration of the bread and wine, a farewell memorial which Jesus, on the point of departing from this life, had left to his disciples."—(Pp. 301—304.)

* This is what Renan says; but he evidently means,—"*which had reference to the discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum*" It is almost the only example of confused thought or expression that we find in the book.

And here, although in reviewing Renan's book we have purposely abstained from answering his assertions, we feel tempted to offer a few remarks, to shew how utterly incompetent the writer is to compose a sound and consistent history. We have seen (*Chris. Unit.*, iii. p. 154) how little weight M. Renan attaches to the statements of the Gospel according to John. The discourses related in it, especially, he treats as framed with a view to put into the Saviour's mouth the ideas or the dreams of the Apostle who wrote them; yet here he founds a contradiction to the statements of the first three Evangelists—(to which he should have added the Apostle Paul, in an epistle written about twenty-three years after the crucifixion)—purely and exclusively on a speech which that untrustworthy Gospel records as having been delivered in the synagogue at Capernaum! That speech, and its effect on the hearers, he grossly misunderstands. The very words which he himself quotes, "I am the bread of life; he that *cometh* to me shall never hunger, and he that *believeth* on me shall never thirst," prove that Jesus was speaking not of food but of faith and life; believing in him and following him. The conduct of the disciples who adhered to him, and the profession of Peter in particular, prove that they understood him in this sense. And although it may be fairly presumed that the Saviour, in the repasts of which he partook with his disciples, was far from manifesting any repulsive rigour or austerity, yet his intercourse was never characterized by that gay enjoyment of the present scene which M. Renan believes to have been its distinguishing feature. He not only does not account for the fact that the ordinance was held, from the very hour of the resurrection, to have been commemorative of the death of Christ, (for this we have the testimony of St. Paul,) but he does not even attempt it. As for the presence of *fish* upon the table, on the occasions of the celebration, it is a thing absolutely without proof; for the authority to which he refers is so thoroughly weak and unsatisfactory, that we shall not pay to his understanding so poor a compliment as to suppose that he can ascribe to it any weight whatever in the scale of historical evidence.

We give it in his own words. "Compare the most

ancient representations of the Last Supper, described, *or rectified*, by M. de Rossi, in his dissertation upon the ΙΧΘΥΣ (*Spiceleguim Solesmense de dom Pitra*, t. iii. p. 568, *et suiv.*) The intention of the anagram which the word ΙΧΘΥΣ contains was *probably* combined with a more ancient tradition on the part played by fish in the apostolic meals:" (p. 303). We write at present where we have no means of referring to the work of M. de Rossi; but we happen to know something of the subject ourselves. We know, for example, that there is no pictorial representation of the Last Supper that can by any possibility be carried back to an earlier date than *the third century* of our era; and Renan himself allows that the Gospels existed and enjoyed their full authority before the close of *the first*. We know, for we have read and carefully studied, the passages of the Fathers in which our blessed Saviour is spoken of under the symbol of the ΙΧΘΥΣ (*the fish*), and we can explain it in twenty lines. The letters which compose that word are the initials of the four words—Ιησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ Υἱός, "*Jesus Christ, the Son of God;*" and, together with the final letter of the last word (which required to be added according to the customary form of Greek abbreviations), were often used in writing as a contraction for the full title. Now, as it happened that these five letters made up the Greek word for "*a fish*," some of the fathers who were very fond of mysteries and allegories, amused themselves with pointing out various reasons, always fanciful enough and often very silly, why this term should be applied to our Saviour, and, to verify their own expositions, they occasionally spoke of Jesus as "*our fish*." In the catacombs at Rome, which were frequented by the Christians in persecuting times, there is a rude picture of the Last Supper, in which there is no representation of a fish upon the table. The letters ΙΧΘΥΣ, however, are written upon the wall; but *over the Saviour's head*, indicating his name and title, just as we often see INRI, the initials of Jesus Nazarenus Rex Iudæorum ("*Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews*") placed over the head of Christ in representations of the crucifixion. There is the whole matter. Are we not right in saying that nothing but the most reckless spirit of contradiction could have led M. Renan to set

aside the explicit testimony of the sacred writers, as well as the universal tradition of the Christian Church, on such grounds? Or was the hypothesis adopted in order to obviate the argument which Leslie in his *Short and Easy Method with the Deists*, and others, have built on the Lord's Supper as a testimony to the truth of the evangelic history?

The mention of the Last Supper leads naturally to the narrative of the closing scenes of the history of Christ.

According to Renan, the predominating feeling in the mind of Christ, at the time of his last visit to Jerusalem, was one of profound disappointment at the little interest which his countrymen appeared to feel in the great idea which had completely absorbed his every faculty, the establishment of a kingdom of God on earth, of which he was himself to be the head. This was to him an overwhelming thought.

"We can easily conceive how, for Jesus, at the period to which we are now come, everything had disappeared from view except the kingdom of God. He was, if we may venture to use the expression, completely out of nature. Family, friendship, native land, had no longer any meaning for him. Doubtless he had made, from that moment, the sacrifice of his life. One is tempted to believe that, at times, seeing in his own death a means of founding his kingdom, *he conceived, with deliberate purpose, the design of getting himself killed.* At other times,—though such a notion was not elevated into the rank of a dogma till a later period,—death presents itself to him as a sacrifice destined to appease his Father and to save mankind. *A singular desire for persecution and punishment penetrated his soul.* His own blood appeared to him like a second baptism in which he was to be bathed, and he seemed possessed with a strange haste to go to meet that baptism which alone could extinguish his thirst."—(Pp. 316, 317.)

These feelings were combined with an impatience under opposition and unbelief, such as he had never before displayed.

"His work not being a work of reason, and sporting with all the generalizations of the human mind, what he demanded most imperiously was *faith*. This was the word that was most frequently repeated in the little supper-room. It is the word of all popular movements. It is clear that none of these movements would take place if he who excites them gained disciples, one after another, by solid proofs logically deduced. Reflexion only leads to doubt; and if the authors of the French Revolution, for instance, had required to be previously convinced by meditations sufficiently long, they would all have reached old age without doing anything.

Jesus, in like manner, aimed less at regular conviction than at impulse *(l'entrainement)*. Urgent, imperious, he brooked no opposition. Conversion must take place, he awaits. His natural mildness seemed to have forsaken him. He was sometimes rough and eccentric *(rude et bizarre)*. His disciples now and then did not understand him, and experienced in his presence a sort of terror. Sometimes his ill humour against all resistance hurried him on to actions inexplicable and apparently absurd. Not that his virtue sank to a lower level, but his struggle on behalf of the ideal against the actual became insupportable. He was tormenting himself and revolting against this contact with the earth. Opposition irritated him. His notion that he was the Son of God became disturbed and exaggerated. The fatal law which condemns the idea to disappointment as soon as it seeks to convert men, applied to him. Men, when they came in contact with him, reduced him to their own level. The tone which he had assumed could not be supported more than a few months. It was time that death should come to disentangle a situation stretched to excess, remove him from the impossibilities of a path which had no outlet, and by delivering him from too lengthened a trial, introduce him henceforth impeccable into his celestial serenity."—(Pp. 319, 320.)

But more cruel than all the vexations which he experienced under eternal contradictions, were, in Renan's judgment, the inward misgivings which his mind experienced respecting the career which he had chosen. Doubts began to force themselves upon his mind; recollections of the peace and calm of his early days which he had forfeited began to present themselves to this thoughts, and made him regret the course which he had adopted. It is true that the evangelists and disciples say nothing, knew nothing, of such misgivings and regrets; but our readers have followed us thus far to little purpose, if they do not by this time see very clearly that Ernest Renan knows far more both of the inner and outward life of Jesus than disciples and evangelists. Hear, for example, how he explains the agony in Gethsemane:—

"During his last days the enormous weight of the mission which he had accepted pressed cruelly on Jesus. *Human nature awoke for a moment. He began, perhaps, to have doubts about his own work. Terror, hesitation, took possession of him, and threw him into a state of exhaustion worse than death.* The man who has sacrificed to an idea his repose and the honourable rewards of life always experiences a moment of sad reaction when the image of death presents itself to him for the first time, and seeks to persuade him that all is vanity. Perhaps some of those touching memorials which the strongest minds preserve, and which at intervals pierce them like a sword, came to him at that moment. *Did he remember the clear*

fountains of Galilee at which he might have been able to refresh himself, the vine and the fig-tree under which he might have sat, the young girls who perhaps might have consented to love him? Did he curse his stern destiny which had interdicted to him the joys conceded to all others? Did he regret his too lofty nature, and did he, the victim of his own greatness, weep that he had not remained a simple artisan at Nazareth? We do not know. All these inward troubles evidently remained a sealed letter to the disciples. They understood nothing of them, and supplied by simple conjectures what was to them obscure in their Master's mighty soul."—(Pp. 378, 379.)

And now, having accompanied M. Renan through the whole of his devious course, we ask our readers to pause and look back on the scenes through which we have passed, and on the impressions which they are calculated to leave. Let us especially view the author's speculations in their bearing upon the character of Christ, and with reference to the conception of that character which it developes. The book is a *Life of Christ;* and a biography, to be good for anything, ought to leave upon the mind some clear and intelligible idea of him who is its hero. It involves an attempt to explain the origin of Christianity, and Christianity itself cannot be understood apart from the soul of him who was its author and finisher. Other religions, other philosophies may be comprehended without such personal reference to their founders. Buddhism has little to do with the inner life of Sakya-Mouni; Platonism has little to do with the personal history of Plato; and Mahometanism is quite independent of the individual experiences of the father of Islam. But by the confession and consciousness of all Christians, Christ and his religion are identical; the truth that dwelt in Jesus is the doctrine that is to reform and regenerate the world. What, then, are we to make of Christ according to M. Renan's representation of his character?

We profess ourselves unable to gain, from this elaborate book, any definite or consistent idea of the great personage who forms its subject. At one time he describes him as the purest, the holiest, most elevated being that ever lived and moved upon this earth. "The highest consciousness of God that ever existed in the bosom of humanity, was that of Jesus."—(P. 75.) He is "the tallest of those columns which shew to man whence he comes and at what he ought to aim. In him is concentrated all that is

good and elevated in our nature."—(P. 459.) And yet this lofty being permitted titles to be ascribed to himself which he knew did not belong to him of right; because he believed that their ascription to him would serve the purpose of the hour. He not only connived at the mistake which attributed to him miraculous knowledge and miraculous powers, but he condescended to help it out by words and acts which savoured of jugglery and imposture. We cannot help thinking that those old writers on the infidel side, who saw nothing divine in Christianity, and openly charged the founder of it as an impostor and a charlatan, were more consistent than M. Renan. They place before us a person in whom it is, indeed, impossible to believe, but whom it is possible to understand; whereas, the Jesus of M. Renan is a being whom it is impossible to believe in, and impossible to understand at the same time. He admits the immense services which this inconceivable person has rendered to the human race; and yet, with the exception of one single doctrine,—*a doctrine too which M. Renan himself regards as an illusion or a superstition*,—the idea, namely, of a paternal providence,—he borrowed every tenet he inculcated from the rabbis and synagogues of Galilee! He is careful to explain that the doctors of Judea and Jerusalem entertained no such opinions; but he utterly fails to shew the slightest ground for the distinction he wishes to establish between their teachings, and those of their brethren in the northern province. But who can believe that an influence emanating from Judaism, as it was then understood and practised in any part of Palestine, could have spread, gained converts, and renewed the whole aspect of society in Europe? He conceives that Jesus has reformed and improved the religious and moral conditions of men throughout the civilized world; that he has earned for himself the title of the "Son of God;" and that he has done so by diffusing certain ideas which have proved fruitful of mighty results. Yet these ideas were, in his mind, dreams, chimeras, wild fancies; the means by which they were diffused were silly frauds and transparent delusions, partly acquiesced in and partly countenanced by the founder of the system; and they produced their great results simply by being misunderstood! Who can make out a

consistent or intelligible view of Christ and Christianity from such a mass of contradiction?

We are not afraid of the effect of this book. It will be cried up and praised by frivolous sceptics, to whom any book that is written in opposition to the claims of Christ Jesus is a treasure found; but to the serious and thoughtful among the unbelievers themselves it will prove distasteful, by reason of its flimsy arguments and unfounded statements; serious Christians will not be shaken by it; and we should not wonder if it be found to add to the adherents of Christianity instead of lessening their number.

HYMN IN SICKNESS.

FATHER, thy gentle chastisement
Falls kindly on my burdened soul;
I see its merciful intent,
To warn me back to thy control;
And pray that, while I kiss the rod,
I may find perfect peace with God.

The errors of my heart I know;
I feel my deep infirmities;
For often virtuous feelings glow,
And holy purposes arise,
But, like the morning clouds, decay,
As empty, though as fair, as they.

Forgive the weakness I deplore:
And let thy peace abound in me,
That I may trust my heart no more,
But wholly cast myself on thee.
Oh, let my Father's strength be mine,
And my devoted life be thine!

H. WARE.

CONGREGATIONAL MEMOIRS.

No. II.—LARNE AND KILWAUGHTER—(*Continued from p.* 233.)

VI.—Robert Sinclair, sixth minister of Larne and Kilwaughter, from 1755 to 1795, was born, I have heard, at Tobermore, in the County Derry, of which historic county no less than four of the six Irish ministers who have officiated in this Congregation were natives.

The following account of Mr. Sinclair's settlement is taken from the old Session Book to which I have already alluded :—

"Dec. 10, 1754.—It is reported that William Nelson went to the Presbytery at Belfast with a supplication desiring a hearing of Rev. Mr. Robert Sinclair, which was granted for four Sabbaths; after which our Minister (Mr. Clugston), Session, and Congregation agreed to have a call drawn up for him to be a colleague to Mr. C., and to succeed him as sole pastor after his decease, if he, the said Mr. S, did survive him. On Feb. 12, 1755, it is stated, that Thomas Nelson went to the Presbytery at Belfast with a supplication to have some members thereof to draw up a call for Rev. Mr. Robert Sinclair; and a few days afterwards, by appointment of Presbytery, the Rev. Messrs. Browne (Ballynure) and Marshall (Ballyclare) came to Larne; and afterwards the call was publicly read in the meeting-house, a copy whereof is as followeth :—

"'*To the Rev. Mr. Robert Sinclair.*

"'We, the Gentlemen,* Session, and other Protestant Dissenting Members of the Old Congregation of Larne, being desirous of having a colleague to our present worthy and beloved Pastor, the Rev. Mr. Josias Clugston, settled amongst us, to take a part with him in the labours of the ministerial office, do, by the advice and concurrence of our said Pastor, and with the approbation of the Rev. Presbytery of Antrim, call and invite you, Mr. Robert Sinclair, and by these presents heartily entreat you, to take the office of a Gospel minister amongst us, and as we expect to receive benefit from your ministry we, on our part, promise to contribute towards your support according to our ability, and at Mr. Clugston's decease (if you survive him) to receive you as our sole Pastor, and upon your acceptance of this our call, to give you all dutiful respect, encouragement, and obedience in the Lord.'

"This call was 'cheerfully signed,' and at the meeting of Presbytery in April, was presented by Thomas Neilson, Elder, to Mr. Sinclair, who then received, and, at the subsequent Presbytery,

* This form of classification was very commonly adopted in Presbyterian "calls," some years ago, but I cannot think that it was either seemly or correct. In our day, the invidious distinction is not likely to be repeated; for the race of Presbyterian gentry, properly so called, is very nearly extinct amongst us.

accepted the same. On this latter occasion, Messrs. James Agnew (father of the late Mr. P. Agnew of Larne), Mr. Andrew Johnston (grandfather of the present Mr. Johnston of Glynn), and Thomas Dunseath, attended as Commissioners from the Congregation, and the Presbytery appointed the ordination of Mr. Sinclair 'to be on June 24, 1755;' on which day he was ordained, and Mr. Drennan of Belfast, (whose father was a native of Larne), preached the sermon; Mr. Colville (of Dromore) made prayer, Mr. Clugston ordained him, and Mr. Maclaine (Antrim) gave the charge."

At this period in our congregational history I have no congregational record of any importance to bring forward. Indeed, with the exception of a few entries respecting the Parish mort-cloth, the only minute which I meet with, about this time, is the following:—

"SEPT. 18, 1756.—At this time the buckle-beggar marriages go on, and few or none but what is married by Mr. Wilson of Ballyclare, a discarded Presbyterian minister." *

The paucity of our records for this period is accounted for by the following statement, which I find under date of 1769, immediately after the account of Mr. Sinclair's ordination:—

"From the above date of 1755, to this date of 1769, no Elder hath been appointed to attend a Presbytery, nor no meeting of the Session appointed for prayer or conversation as formerly." †

In the absence of record, I venture to give the following Congregational legend relating to this period, which the reader may take for what he thinks it to be worth. It is affirmed, then, on the authority of tradition, that about the time of which we are now speaking there occurred a harvest, when the weather for several successive weeks had been exceedingly wet, and the grain was rotting in

* The Presbyteries of Antrim and Templepatrick often tried to stop the irregular proceedings of this gentleman, but I do not think their efforts were very successful, as indeed such efforts seldom are on such occasions.

† As this is the last reference which I shall have occasion to make to this Old Session Book, I may as well mention, on the authority of his great grandson (Mr. Robert Smiley of Islandmagee, who is now 80 years of age), that its writer, John Finlay, was Precentor of the Congregation, as well as an Elder, and Session Clerk. When he had officiated for 48 years as leader of the Psalmody, he was afflicted with total blindness, but he asked leave to retain the situation for two years longer, in order to complete his half-century of official duty. This was readily granted to him, as he had all the Psalms by heart; and he was spared to complete his fifty years. The Session Book which he kept is now in my possession, and is altogether a curious and interesting document.

the stooks. At length there came a particularly fine, drying, "birling" day. Unfortunately, however, it happened to be also a Sunday. The people were all collected in the meeting-house, and Mr. Sinclair was about to begin the service, when the Old Squire (Mr. W. Agnew) addressing him in the pulpit, said it would be better for him to have no sermon that day, but to let the people go home to put in their grain. The minister acted on the suggestion of his patron, and dismissed the Congregation with a short prayer and benediction. Most of his hearers proceeded to act on their landlord's hint and to put in their grain; but some of them could not be induced to do what they considered evil in order that good might come, and by these latter people it was long remarked and remembered, that the man who first yoked his horse on this Sunday for the purpose of putting in his grain, lost that horse by death before the close of the year.

But to return to history, properly so called, Mr. Sinclair, as we have seen, was ordained in 1755 as assistant and successor to Mr. Clugston. The latter minister, however, did not die until 1775, so that Mr. Sinclair was for no less than twenty years an assistant minister. But he was much more fortunate than have been most persons similarly situated. During the whole of his lengthened period of expectancy he lived in Kilwaughter Castle, or, as it was then called, Kilwaughter House,* and acted as tutor to the Squire's son, whom (I have heard) he even accompanied, in this capacity, to College in Scotland, and stayed with him the entire Session. How the flock were fed on these occasions in the absence of their proper pastor I cannot say. Perhaps Mr. Clugston, the senior shepherd, kindly resumed the crook for the winter months. But indeed at this period religion was at a very

* My late excellent friend, Miss Jones, of Kilwaughter Castle, often told me that on all occasions when she in her youth came down from Belfast on a visit to her grandfather, the Old Squire, Mr Sinclair was invariably a regular inmate of the house. I have also frequently heard another friend, the late Mr. P. Agnew of Larne, mention that when Mr. Sinclair, shortly after his ordination, was taken to visit the Squire, the old gentleman said to him, on rising to come away, "Now, Mr. S., I hope you will not be a stranger at Kilwaughter," "and indeed (added my informant) he was no stranger, for he lived twenty years in the house, and had the best horse in the stable kept for his exclusive use."

low ebb thoughout the entire province of Ulster. As compared with politics, it occupied a very subordinate position. In 1760 the French landed at Carrickfergus. On this occasion several corps of the Militia assembled at Bellahill, the residence of Robert Dalway, Esq., to repel the invaders, and amongst others arrived from Larne, Lord Antrim's regiment, amounting to 115 men, armed and in uniform, commanded by Captain Adam Johnston, and Lieutenants James Agnew and James Blair, all of whom were, I am sure, members of our Congregation. Some of the corps had their ministers amongst their officers, *e.g*, "Lieut. Rev. James Dunbar" (Islandmagee), and "Ensign Rev. Thomas Reid" (Glenarm). Indeed, on occasions of public danger, the Presbyterian ministers of Ulster have never shewn a disposition to hide themselves behind the horns of the altar. They have rather been *too* ready to take the front of the battle. And, therefore, if, in the case of the Larne regiment, the name of Rev. Mr. Sinclair should be missed, I am bound to give the following explanation of its absence, which I heard shortly after I came to this neighbourhood. It is stated then, that at this period of national danger, Mr. Agnew, of Kilwaughter, collected a body of the most efficient of his tenantry, and having armed them as well as the circumstances of the case permitted, marched them, accompanied by his and their minister towards Carrickfergus to meet the enemy. But whether, before their arrival, the French had already been beaten back to their ships, or whether, from being a comparatively irregular levy, their names do not appear on the list of Militia given in M'Skimin's History of Carrickfergus, as mustering at Bellahill, I cannot say. But certainly at this time the Kilwaughter men did turn out to repel the foe, and certainly, also, their minister was in his proper place, at their head.

A few years after the last date, that is in 1769, Mr. Sinclair, whilst residing at Kilwaughter House, must have witnessed an outrage which was committed in his immediate neighbourhood. In that year the "Hearts of Steel" set fire to a house adjoining the site of the present Castle Gardens, from which the Squire had ejected a worthless tenant, who invoked, at the hands of these rustic lawgivers, "the wild justice of revenge," and

also afforded them an opportunity of punishing the man who had had the audacity to take a farm from which a tenant had been expelled.

We may now pass on to a period in our national and local history, when Presbyterian ministers fairly doffed the black and donned the scarlet. I allude to the era of the Irish Volunteers, which comprised a few years before and after 1782. At this time the motto *cedant arma togæ* was signally reversed. If the Presbyterian ministers of those days wore gowns at all, they also frequently appeared in their pulpits with the military blue or scarlet underneath.* And as were the pastors, so were the people. The regular worship of God on His holy day and in His holy house was at this time very generally neglected, as appears from the minutes of several Presbyteries at this date; nor could the people be wiled back to the forsaken sanctuary but by the prospect of hearing a politico-military discourse from some such text as "teach the children of Israel the use of the bow."† The reader, therefore, will not be surprised to hear that the minister, at this time, of Larne and Kilwaughter, was affected, like the rest of his brethren, with the military mania of the period. He was a Volunteer, and being a man of most dignified and handsome appearance, he was, also, I have been told, a splendid soldier. On one occasion (as I have been informed by mine own friend and my father's friend, the late Dr. Patrick, of Ballymena, who was a native of Larne, and a pupil of Mr. Sinclair's), when the Volunteers of this neighbourhood had assembled in great force for a review on Ballygally Hill, and when something had occurred to prevent the attendance of the reviewing officer,

* Mr. Sinclair Kelburn, minister of 3rd Belfast, is stated, on the occasion of a military riot, when the Volunteers beat to arms, to have mounted the pulpit dressed in full uniform as a private in a volunteer corps, and while preaching, to have rested his musket against the pulpit door. The discourse, delivered under such circumstances, was, we can well believe, very energetic; and as the Christian soldier enforced his patriotic exhortations by appropriate action and gesticulation, not only did the preacher's own musket rattle, but his armed audience characteristically expressed their approbation by striking the butts of their muskets on the meeting-house floor.

† A sermon from this text, which was afterwards published, was preached by Mr. Crawford, minister of Strabane, to a corps of Volunteers called "The Urney *Foresters*," which made the text particularly appropriate.

the armed brethren unanimously paid Mr. Sinclair the compliment of requesting him to discharge the required duty. This he did, according to Dr. Patrick's account, in the most dignified and graceful manner, walking slowly along the line, and afterwards standing, with his grey hairs uncovered, to receive and return the military salute.*

Continuing to be political, according to the character of the times, I have now to mention that in 1792, our Congregation had the honour of furnishing a representative for the County Antrim, on the Independent or Whig interest, which was then predominant in the County. This gentleman was Mr. Edward Jones Agnew,† grandson of the old Squire, William Agnew, whose only son, Mr. Sinclair's pupil, had died during his father's lifetime, young and unmarried. Preparatory to Mr. Jones Agnew's election, meetings were held in his favour in various parts of the county, and amongst other places at Kilwaughter, where (we are told) "a very respectable number of freeholders having met to consider the merits of the man who should represent this county in Parliament, Mr. Alexander Nelson in the chair," adopted and published resolutions in which I think we may recognize the hand of Mr. Agnew's minister, Mr. Sinclair. After stating the qualifications which, in their opinion, a candidate for a seat in Parliament ought to possess, the Kilwaughter electors finally

"Resolved—That these qualities, being prominent and conspicuous in Edward Jones Agnew, Esq., force him upon our minds as the

* In this matter of volunteer-soldiering the Presbyterian Clergy of Ulster did not stand alone. The Bishop of Derry of those days, who was also Earl of Bristol, rode from his magnificent seat at Downhill, in County Derry, to the Dublin Convention, mounted on a splendid charger, dressed in scarlet, as Colonel of the Londonderry Volunteers, and attended by a brilliant staff of young Curates, acting as his aide-de-camps, who were also superbly mounted (the Bishop's stud being the largest and finest in Ireland), and who were similarly armed and attired with their Right Reverend Commander.

† Mr. Edward Jones, who, on succeeding to the Kilwaughter estate, took the name of Agnew, in compliance with his grandfather's will, was son of Mr. Valentine Jones of Belfast, by his third wife, who was the only daughter of "the Old Squire," Mr. William Agnew. The lady had been previously married to Mr. Ross, by whom she had had two sons, both of whom died young and unmarried. Mr. Jones Agnew, until the day of his death (which took place in March, 1834, a few weeks before my settlement in Larne), continued a member of our Congregation. So did his relative, the late Mr. P. Agnew, of Larne; but the Agnew family are now, of course, all members of the Established Church.

fittest person to fill the vacant seat in Parliament for this county. As a humane, moderate landlord, he stands unrivalled in this country; as a benefactor to the poor, his charity and munificence are without a parallel, so that, if the blessings of a numerous and happy tenantry, if the prayers of the aged, the fatherless, and the widow, take effect, he must be the successful candidate. And we are bold to declare that this our eulogy of Mr. Jones Agnew does not proceed from prudential constraint, fear, or necessity; for we would oppose him if he were on the wrong side: nor is it the servile fawning of tenants on a landlord—though we glory in that connexion—but a just tribute to the numerous virtues of a well-earned reputation."

Mr. Agnew was triumphantly returned, with scarcely the shadow of a contest, and without even the shadow of a poll. He represented the county from 1792 to 1797. In the latter year he sought re-election, and stood a poll, but was defeated; and the banner of Independence, which was then struck down, has never since been successfully raised in the County Antrim.

Mr. Sinclair, on his marriage and consequent removal from Kilwaughter House, had lived for a few years in the town of Larne; but he spent the last of his days at Drumahoe, in the Parish of Kilwaughter, where he died on the 20th of February, 1795.* To this day his funeral

* The following sketch of the closing years of Mr. Sinclair's life and ministry was kindly furnished to me, some time ago, by my friend (who was also a pupil of Mr. Sinclair's, and in that capacity an inmate of his dwelling), the late Rev. W. Moore, of Larne and Londonderry. The picture which it gives of the interior of a country minister's house about eighty years ago is so simply graphic that I cannot refrain from submitting it to the reader:—"When I first knew Mr. Sinclair intimately, he was a fresh and venerable old man, with a white bushy wig, a good complexion, and noble aspect. His voice was sonorous and pretty well modulated. His manner in preaching was striking and impressive. In delineating character he was graphic, but rather more familiar than is now approved in pulpit oratory; though many turns of expression reminded you that you were listening to one who was conversant with the sages of Greece and Rome. His intimacy with the Latin classics gave a complexion, I conceive, to his way of thinking and speaking, and the sentiments which he imbibed from "the prince of Roman orators" (as he loved to call his favourite Cicero) accorded well with the high principles of civil and religious liberty of which he was a bold and strenuous advocate. At the period when I knew him, he did not enter much into society. When the late Mr. Jones Agnew came to the neighbourhood, he frequently entertained Mr. S. at the Castle, and he was hilarious and extremely entertaining after the fillip which an evening from home gave him. He would sit in his parlour and amuse the little family circle with many a playful effusion, some sprinklings of ancient lore or curious incidents, or diverting anecdotes; and, when it would set off the narrative, he

is spoken of by old people as being the largest that was ever seen in this part of the country. His remains were laid in Larne Churchyard, in the same grave which twenty years before, had received those of his friend and predecessor, Mr. Clugston. On their common tombstone may be traced the following Latin inscription :—

"Hic jacent omnia quæ dissolvi potuerunt duorum virorum reverendorum, viz.—Josiæ Clugston, et Roberti Sinclair, quorum uterque cætus antiquioris Protestantium Dissentientium apud Larne fuerat minister, prior quinquaginta octo annos, cum decesserit, 80 annos natus 10 die Augusti 1775; alter triginta novem annos cum mortem obierit 70 annos natus 20 die Februarii, 1795. Hi amicitiâ conjuncti, literarum periti, sancti, humani, religionem christianam doctrinâ et moribus pieque, probeque illustrârunt.

"Renewed 1858, Classon Porter, *Minister*."

Mr. Sinclair published a sermon which he preached before the old Volunteers, from the text—"If there be any virtue, think on these things." Mr. Bryson of Antrim, preached his funeral sermon, which (I believe) was also published; but after the most diligent search, I have not been able to procure a copy of either of these publications.

Mr. Sinclair married Elizabeth, daughter of Robert Allen, and widow of William Jackson, both of Larne. By this shrewd and sensible woman, who survived him many years, he had two children, a son and a daughter. His son, John Sinclair, who also survived him, ran for some time a not very reputable career at Drumahoe, and finally emigrated to America, where I have heard that a son of his, Robert Sinclair, was, some years ago, a proprietor of a monster hotel. Mr. Sinclair's daughter, Fanny, married a Mr. Williamson.

(To be continued.)

enlivened it by droll dramatic representations of the character produced. Most pleasant and instructive was it to hang on the lips of the garrulous old man. Methinks I see before me his little wife (for she reached but a little above his elbow) peering up at him with her black admiring eyes, and devouring his discourse. He had a great fondness for music, and his favourite airs were such as were played by itinerant harpers, some of whom paid him occasional visits, and were most kindly treated. As there was no instrument of music in the family, the master would sit for a great part of the evening, and whistle very softly and tastefully such tunes as Aileen-Aroon, Carolan's Receipt, or Cean-dubh-Deelish. For several years before his death he does not seem to have pursued any serious study, but to have spent his time in what he would call *otium cum dignitate*."

RICHARD WRIGHT.

We have no desire to laud the former days at the expense of the present. It is neither wise nor graceful thus to do. We gladly own that the present times are far more propitious to the formation and spread of liberal views of Christianity and duty than any which have preceded, whilst there are numbers now—right-minded, zealous, and active—who, knowing and valuing their religious principles, and earnestly desiring their spread in the world, take, at the same time, the best methods to make them effective. Such there are,—and we gratefully acknowledge it,—who preach the faith out of pure hearts and love unfeigned, and whose grand desire is, whilst spending and being spent in the Redeemer's service, that the work of his and our God and Father may prosper in their hands. Only the mistake should not be made,—for a great as well as a grievous one it would be,—that now, and now only, is the time when Unitarianism has been presented in a popular form; that nothing was done till within the last dozen or twenty years in this direction. We are but too apt to forget the worthies of a past age, and yet that age witnessed those who toiled and persevered and wore themselves out, in order that Unitarian Christianity might be understood by the people, and that the wayfaring man should be instructed in the truth as it is in Jesus. For His name's sake they bore and had patience, they laboured and fainted not.

Among these devoted men, and at their head, was Richard Wright, whose name and whose fame were, half a century since, in all our Churches, and who should be yet held by us in grateful remembrance. We knew him well, and have a vivid recollection of him in the pulpit,—of his plain and familiar utterance, his energetic mode of delivery, and of the outpourings of his spirit in prayer and the sermon. Never was a more transparent character, one of which it might be more truthfully said—"You could hold him up and look through him as crystal." Like Paul, his bodily presence was far from commanding, but his words as well as his writings were weighty and powerful. A fierce and no way scrupulous polemic of his day wrote thus, with evident reference to Mr. Wright,—"Mission-

aries there have been, who have encountered much for *the love of Christ*, but that missionaries *calling* themselves Christian should go about to work the *rejection of his name*, is a singularity indeed. Here we see the followers of a different Lord going forth to inculcate, as the one great maxim which alone is worthy to be taught, that *there is no Son and no Holy Ghost*. Here we see the messengers of another Master directed to carry with them a *false Gospel*, which, whilst it bears the name, shall more effectually subvert the doctrines of the true Gospel of Christ. Here we find the teacher directed to guard against all the dangers of *belief*, and to enforce emphatically, as the most important truth, that *he alone shall be saved who believeth not*." Well was it observed of this diatribe, that if the writer of it would but read Wright's Missionary Discourses he might then regard it "as imperatively his duty publicly to retract" such "injurious and shocking assertions."

Richard Wright was born in very humble life, and not long after the coming of George the Third to the throne. He says of himself—"Religious impressions and the desire of religious knowledge are among my earliest recollections;" and it is little matter of surprise that even at fifteen he embraced Calvinistic views,—"proper Calvinism," he remarks, "not what is now called moderate Calvinism." He has given a touching account of the anxieties and fears which accompanied what may be termed this, the first step in his spiritual life. He owed much to Calvinists, though not to Calvinism, as had Priestley, long before, who made a similar acknowledgement. But young Wright's next step was into the milder regions of Arminianism, from thence he became a Sabellian, and at length a confirmed, rejoicing Unitarian. Whilst holding Sabellian views, he became the minister of a General Baptist Congregation at Wisbeach, the members of which held also Sabellian views. But Mr. Wright, from reading and study, was now advancing to Unitarianism, and he had the great joy at length of bringing his people round to the same doctrine, though at first there was considerable opposition; yet during the whole transition the esteem and love of his hearers suffered not the least diminution. He was loved by them,—he was loved by all with whom he ever came into contact.

It was at Wisbeach that Mr. Wright first entertained the thought of becoming a Unitarian Missionary. He had assiduously cultivated the art of speaking extempore, and for it nature, or rather Divine Providence, had eminently qualified him. He made frequent visits to places in the Eastern Counties, and as far as Yorkshire, preaching wherever he could, in regular pulpits, in barns, in market places, and by the sea side. His more intimate friends vainly tried to dissuade him from working experiments so full, as they imagined, of hazard,—so little likely to be successful. But he was not the man to yield to such representations. The word was in his heart as a burning fire; he was weary with forbearing, he could not stay. He now formed an acquaintance with Mr. Vidler, of London, a man of much note among the Baptists, and who had also become a Unitarian. Through Mr. Vidler, Mr. Wright gained an introduction to some of the leading Unitarians of the metropolis, and who had long contemplated the formation of a society for the more general diffusion of their doctrines, especially by missionary preaching. Accordingly, in 1806, the Unitarian Fund was instituted, and for many years it was the most popular and successful of our Associations. From the first Mr. Wright was one of the missionaries, being, he says, left to act upon plans of his own forming, but without severing his connexion with the Wisbeach congregation. So well and fully did Mr. Wright justify the choice of the Fund Committee, that three or four years after this his partial engagement, he was earnestly solicited to become their permanent Missionary, at an annual salary, the amount to be fixed by himself. He consented, at the very moderate sum of one hundred pounds a year, made up subsequently to guineas, to devote himself to the work of a travelling preacher, and this at a time when all the necessaries of life were exceedingly high in price, and travelling was much more expensive and tedious than now. But disinterestedness was a leading trait in Wright's character. His Wisbeach friends kindly allowed him the use of the house he occupied there rent free; and for the three winter months of the year he was the pastor of the Society, the other nine were devoted to Missionary purposes, and zealously so. With determined perseverance

he travelled, as he has recorded, three thousand miles on the average, year by year, for eight years, and for the most part on foot, or, as he thus has most graphically put it,—"In travelling and acting as a Missionary I always adopted the most economical plans. I performed most of my journeys on foot, and in walking thirty or forty miles, which I often did in a day, I seldom spent above a shilling or eighteenpence in eating and drinking. I frequently preached in the evening after a walk of twenty or thirty miles. After walking six or eight miles I usually stopped at a public house and took a small glass of ale, resting while I smoked a single pipe." "In the middle of the day I would take some bread and cheese, or a red herring." "Walking is fine exercise." "A Missionary should acquire the habit of walking well, as he will have to go on roads where there are no regular conveyances." This, it must be observed, was written prior to the age of railroads. Personal accommodation appears to have been the least of Richard Wright's thoughts; he knew how to be abased and how to abound. He says, "I have, after preaching, supped on barley bread and sour milk, and slept in a bed on a clay floor, the room open to the thatch." "The following night I have slept at the house of a merchant in Hull, in a room which was carpeted and had every genteel accommodation, but I rested as comfortably in the former as in the latter, and my friend, where the accommodation seemed so mean, did what he could to make me comfortable, equally with my other friend where the accommodation was so genteel." He remarks in another place,—"It will not do for the Missionary to consult his own ease or personal gratification; he must be willing to bear incessant labour both of body and mind, not shrinking from fatigue nor declining any exertion the cause may require." "The cherishing an habitual sense of the presence of God—a sense of my entire dependence on and accountability to him—my living in the exercise of confidence in him, looking to him for success and my future reward, gave me strength, kept my zeal unabated, raised me superior to difficulties and disappointments, led me to despair of nothing."

And so from Cornwall to Scotland, from Wales to Kent and Lincoln, Mr. Wright incessantly toiled on, preaching

the simple faith of Unitarian Christianity, and rewarded by the happy consciousness that he was in the way of well-doing,—that the talents lent were in use to the uttermost. He was in journeyings often, in watchings often, in weariness and painfulness, in the daily care of the churches—those he had built up. But this continued labour wore down his constitution, though that constitution was of iron. Past his sixtieth year, the hitherto indefatigable missionary felt the need of more repose than he had hitherto taken. He took a smaller but not less congenial field of duty at Trowbridge, the place where his beloved son in the faith, Samuel Martin, has since ministered so usefully and long. Here still actively employed, Mr. Wright remained a few years, teaching publicly, and from house to house, keeping back nothing that was profitable to his hearers, and maintaining, with all the energy of youth, the "long-lost doctrine of the Divine Unity." He finally settled in Lincolnshire, not far from the scene of his birth, and to the end of his days ceased not to bear testimony to the faith that was in him, his support and solace, and which he anxiously desired might become the hope and comfort of all who named and loved the Lord Jesus.

It remains but to say, that some forty years since Mr. Wright published a Review of his Missionary Life and Labours, a very unpretending but most interesting volume, of which much use has been made in the preceding sketch. The work is probably now known to few, but may occasionally be met with at an old book-stall. To any one who can secure a copy it will be a treasure.

"A NEW UNITARIAN TEST."

Under this heading there was published, in *The London Inquirer* of August 6, an editorial comment on the correspondence between Mr. James Heron and ourselves, which appeared in the last number of *The Christian Unitarian*. The following is the article in full:—

"We invite our readers' special attention to the extraordinary correspondence in another part of this paper, between the Rev. C. J. M'Alester of Holywood, and Mr. James Heron, the manager of the Ulster Bank. A new phase of the notorious 'Belfast controversy' is here opened. The rage for Tests and Declarations of Faith,

prevalent amongst the professors of the narrowest form of Orthodoxy in this country, has extended to the North of Ireland, and not content with binding the ministers of the Remonstrant Synod by the celebrated 'Three Questions,' an attempt is now made by the clerical party to impose a test upon the laity of what is styled a 'non-subscribing' Church.

The simple facts of the case are these. Mr. James Heron, an able and accomplished man, who is unable to close his eyes to the results of modern Biblical criticism, while he retains a firm hold of the fundamental verities of the Christian revelation, has rendered himself peculiarly obnoxious to the leaders of the Belfast 'Inquisition' by the manly part he has taken in resisting and exposing the manifestations of intolerance which have divided our Church in the North of Ireland into two antagonistic parties. Imitating the immemorial policy of the Holy Office, the object now is to blacken his religious character. He is charged publicly with being a Deist, and, what is infinitely worse, with being an Infidel who, by underhand practices, has sought to gain influence in a Christian Church. On publicly stating that he is not a Deist, his ministerial accuser, instead of honourably withdrawing his charge, and acting upon the wholesome Christian rule of accepting every man as a Christian who desires to be considered one, refuses any redress unless Mr. Heron professes himself a Christian according to a special and narrow interpretation of the term. In other words, Mr. Heron must still lie under the imputation of infidelity unless he subscribes a test drawn up by the Rev. C. J. M'Alester, of Holywood—a test which ignores all the results of modern Biblical science, and raises up the Scriptures without discrimination as an infallibly Divine authority.

"We purposely refrain at present from comment upon this extraordinary attempt to impose a test upon Unitarian laymen. This new and contemptible display of clerical intolerance rouses in us so strong a feeling of indignation that we are unable to criticise it with the decorous mildness which some of our friends recommend when dealing with *Unitarian* bigotry. We hope that the eyes of any English sympathisers with those who have now more than ever vindicated the truth of their appellation, 'Belfast Intolerants,' will be opened to perceive the natural results of the policy of narrowness and exclusion. If the intelligent Unitarian laity of Ulster tamely submit to this new Test, we can only assure them that they are made of different stuff from their brethren in England, and that there is a wider separation between the sister Churches than even the previous unhappy dissensions had indicated. We rejoice to believe that such displays of Unitarian intolerance would be simply impossible on this side of the Irish Channel, or would be met by such a strong and unanimous outburst of indignation as would soon bring the clerical test-makers to their senses."

We forbear, as a matter of good taste, to criticise a correspondence in which we ourselves were a party, and we are quite satisfied that it should be allowed to speak for itself. With respect to Mr. Heron's religious views we have merely to state, that we expressed what we believed to be the truth respecting them, and that nothing occurred in the correspondence to lead us materially to change our

opinion; but we are pleased to learn, on the authority of *The Inquirer*—we would have been better satisfied if we had Mr. Heron's own authority for the statement—that he firmly holds "the verities of the Christian revelation." Neither are we disposed curiously to inquire what is understood by this expression—"the verities of the Christian revelation." To believe in the Christian revelation at all is enough to satisfy us, and is much more than some profess who, nevertheless, are regarded as Christians by *The Inquirer;* for, in a recent number of that journal, a correspondent, under the signature of "H," argued, apparently with the concurrence of the Editor, that the essence of Christianity was merely "a belief in the spirit of God as immanent in matter and in the soul of man." But granting that Mr. Heron's views are such as *The Inquirer*, on some unacknowledged authority, declares them to be, he was not authorized to go to a congregation with which he had no ecclesiastical connexion, and strive to intimidate its members into an acquiescence in his own views of religious liberty. By an act so unwarrantable, the spirit of freedom was grossly violated, and a shameful assault was made, by one who is loud in his professions of attachment to religious liberty, on the rights of his fellow-Christians. That the Remonstrants of Ballymoney did not yield to the threats of law and spoliation with which they were menaced, did not render the attack that was made on them the less unjustifiable.

But our business now is with the Editor of *The Inquirer*, who has exhibited, in his treatment of the correspondence, all the unfairness and inconsistency for which not only in the North of Ireland, but in many parts of England, he has earned so unenviable a notoriety. He has, on many occasions, deliberately suppressed whatever might seem to militate against the party with which he is leagued, and whose views he seeks, *per fas et nefas*, to promote. He studiously withheld from his readers the report of a jubilee gathering at Ballyclare, at which the speeches were such as to bring ridicule and contempt on his favourite party. He carefully concealed the disgraceful effort that was made by three ministers of the Presbytery of Antrim—great friends of religious liberty—to deprive the small body that, on principle, was constrained to secede from them, of any benefit in the Widows' Fund Association, —an effort which was only defeated by the unanimous and hearty vote of the Calvinistic brethren. And now, when he publishes the correspondence between Mr. Heron and ourselves, he cunningly omits the introductory passage, in which, as accounting for the paragraph of which Mr. Heron complains, it is stated that he went to Ballymoney, while the Remonstrant Congregation there was vacant, "demanded to inspect the title-deeds of the Congregational property, and threatened the people with legal proceedings and the loss of their meeting-house, if they allowed the Presbytery to ask the minister-elect a single question."

So much for the unfairness of the Editor of *The Inquirer;* and now let us expose his inaccuracy and inconsistency. He charges us with introducing a "new Unitarian test"—"a test which ignores all the results of modern Biblical science, and raises up the Scriptures without discrimination as an infallibly Divine authority." When we read this accusation, we were utterly perplexed to know

what the test was which brought down upon us so sweeping a charge. We knew that we had carefully worded our letters to Mr. Heron, so as to avoid the slightest appearance of endeavouring to impose our views on him. We said nothing of a belief in the Divine Mission of the Saviour—a principle which we would place at the very foundation of the Christian religion, and which we would represent as the rock on which it is built, had we not been gravely informed by *The Inquirer* some time ago that "Christianity was not built upon a rock at all"! Our peculiar views—narrow perhaps they are—we never dreamed of introducing for Mr. Heron's acceptance; but we simply proposed to him the form in which his own party agreed to acknowledge their faith in Christianity. Immediately on reading the article in which we were thus accused, we wrote a courteous note to *The Inquirer*, asking where in our correspondence we had insisted on such a "new test" as he attributed to us. We received a cavalier reply from him, in which he simply referred us to the "tenor" of our letters; but we learned from the next number of *The Inquirer*, that the test which roused so strong a feeling of indignation in the breast of the Editor, was neither more nor less than "the Scriptures our rule of faith." Why, that is the very principle—test they would not call it—which his favourite party in the Presbytery of Antrim contended for all through the controversy which ended in the disruption of the body—the very principle which Mr. Hall and his co-presbyters maintained in the law courts, as the very essence of Non-Subscription, and under the plea of which, though they lost the Congregation, they managed to retain the meeting-house, of Ballyclare. And while, with "the Scriptures the sole rule of faith" inscribed on their banner, the majority of the Presbytery resisted those who maintained that something more than the acknowledgment of that principle should be required from a candidate for the Christian ministry, in order to satisfy the Congregation and the ordainers of his fitness for the sacred office, *The Inquirer* cheered them on, applauded their views, and declared that they were "the only hope of liberal Christianity in the North of Ireland"! Yet now, with an inconsistency of which we cannot imagine any other journal capable, *The Inquirer* turns round upon us and gravely represents, as a "new test" introduced by ourselves, the very statement which from the beginning has been accepted by Non-Subscribers, and throughout all the discussions that have agitated our Churches in Ulster, has been put forward by *The Inquirer's* favourite party as the basis of their organization.

It may be alleged, in reply to our remarks, that this principle was designed only for the clergy, and not for the laity. We reply, that our Churches should be open to all who may come, none should be excluded; our Communion table should be free to all who desire in that expressive feast to remember the Lord; but no man can honestly undertake an office in any church, if he do not acquiesce in the fundamental principles on which it is based. The distinction here between minister and layman is nothing more than an ingenious fiction.

The Inquirer, in a subsequent article, alleges that the proposition respecting the Scriptures, laid down in the Sixth of the Thirty-

Nine articles of the Church of England, is much broader than that adopted by the Non-Subscribers, for it simply says—"Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation;" but the writer forgets that that is only one small portion of the Sixth Article; and that article is only a thirty-ninth part of the whole; and all the Scriptures are only a part of what is required to be believed in the English Church. In that Church you must accept as canonical all the books of the Old Testament and New, as they are commonly received; while "the Scriptures our rule of faith," does not thus bind us, and may be received in such a way as to leave us perfectly free to investigate and criticise them with the utmost liberty, and in no sense demands that we should ignore all the results of modern Biblical science and raise up the Scriptures without discrimination as an infallibly Divine authority. But when men come to the conclusion, to which Mr. Binns and one of the Editors of *The Herald* have arrived, and to which *The Inquirer* seems in occasional moods to be approaching, the sooner the Scriptures are removed, not only from the ecclesiastical constitution with which they may be connected, but also from their reading desks and their family altars, the better for their consistency, if not for their spiritual improvement.

The reference we have made to the Church of England reminds us of an extraordinary passage which we find in *The Inquirer's* article, just referred to; it is as follows:—

"We do not hesitate to affirm, that were we forced to become residents in Ulster—which Heaven forbid!—we should infinitely prefer to become members of a Church subject to the wholesome restraints of law, than to be bound by tests imposed by the caprice of the unscholarly leaders of the Remonstrant Synod; and, if we are not misinformed, some of the most intelligent laity of the Non-Subscribing Church in the North of Ireland are rapidly coming to the same conclusion."

Much as we have seen of the looseness of principle which characterizes *The Inquirer*, we were not prepared for the recklessness here exhibited. How a man who believes in Christianity and disbelieves the Trinity,—who advocates a Christian ministry, but rejects Church authority and a priesthood invested with peculiar powers, and who professes to abjure all creeds,—should, rather than attach himself to a free Church which makes its only basis a belief in the Divine Mission of the Saviour, or the acceptance of the Scriptures as a rule of faith (with the utmost freedom in interpreting and criticising them), join in a service which presents the Trinity as an object of worship, acknowledges the absolving power of the priest, presents three conflicting creeds for his acceptance, and consigns to everlasting perdition all who will not receive the Athanasian doctrine of the Godhead, is more than we can understand. It may be that in some of our congregations there are occasional defections to the Establishment, but they are certainly not more frequent than in the principal congregations of the Antrim Presbytery, and possibly just as rare as in the English Unitarian congregations, however free their theology: and we believe that, if anything is at present calculated to weaken the

cause of Unitarianism, it is neither the influence of fashion and the attraction of an Established Church on the one hand, nor, on the other, the maintenance of Christian principles on the part of Presbytery, Synod, or Association, but that bold and growing spirit of scepticism which seeks to eliminate everything of revelation from religion, and leave us in its stead nothing but a bald and cheerless Deism.

"CHRISTIANITY IN RELATION TO MODERN THOUGHT."

Such is the title which the Rev. W. Binns, of Birkenhead, gives to the sermon which he preached before the Lancashire and Cheshire Assembly at their late meeting, and which led to some discussion on the part of the members. We particularly noticed Mr. Binns's views in an article in our last number on "Christianity without Christ." We were not surprised to find Mr. Binns's opinions somewhat sharply criticised in *The Unitarian Herald*, as, however unsatisfactory the tone of that journal has long been in reference to the authority of Revelation, it has never broadly advocated the New Theology. But in a later number of *The Herald* we find an article by a "Unitarian Minister" eulogizing Mr. Binns's sermon, and endorsing all the positions which he laid down; and in an editorial note in *The Herald* of the next week, we are informed that this article, avowing the most sceptical opinions, is *from the pen of one of the Editors*. Some of our readers regarded us as entertaining groundless suspicions, when we taxed *The Herald* with countenancing the Deistical views of Parker and Rénan, and to many the connexion of Dr. Beard and Mr. Gaskell with its management was guarantee enough that no such opinions would be advocated or tolerated in its columns: but now the fact is established, on the admission of the Editors themselves, that one of their number (we believe, neither of the gentlemen we have named) openly avows and maintains in *The Herald* the opinions held by Parker, Rénan, and Binns. It will be remembered that the Rev. H. Green, of Knutsford, took exception to Mr Binns's sermon at the meeting of the Assembly, and objected to "best thanks" being accorded to him. Here is a letter which this gentleman has since written to *The Herald*, giving his opinion of the views preached by Mr. Binns, and endorsed by one of the Editors:—

"In your journal of Friday, July 29, is a communicated article by 'a Unitarian Minister,' in which he gives the six chief positions laid down by Mr Binns in his sermon, with the above title ('Christianity in Relation to Modern Thought'), endorses them all, and 'would gladly enter into a detailed argument in support of them.' I do not contravene his liberty or his right to do this, but, as mover of an amendment to the proposal of 'best thanks' to Mr. Binns for this sermon, I simply ask for the favour of a few lines' space, to say, that five or six weeks of reflection on the step I took, at the prompting of the moment, only strengthens the conviction that I did what both conscience and Christian principle demanded, and made use of the only proper means open to me, as a member of the Provincial Meeting, to

express disapprobation of those six positions. The greater part of them I utterly repudiate; with no one of them do I agree. As far as I understand their spirit, drift, and meaning, *they amount to a disowning of Christianity as a divine revelation.* . . .

"HENRY GREEN.

"*Knutsford, July* 31, 1864."

When from time to time we have stated that in England, under the name of Unitarianism, Deistical opinions were sometimes held and preached, we were considered by some of our own friends as representing matters to be worse than they were. Here in the sermon of Mr. Binns and its public acceptance by an Editor of *The Herald*, who is also a Unitarian minister, and in the testimony of Mr. Green respecting "its spirit, drift, and meaning," all that we have ever alleged is abundantly confirmed. We do not complain of ministers holding such opinions; they have every right to do so; but between those who accept and those who reject revelation, there can, in church matters, be no union and no co-operation.

INTELLIGENCE.

ORDINATION AT STOCKPORT.

On August 11th, Mr. R. Pilcher, B.A., of Manchester New College, was ordained to the pastoral charge of the Unitarian Congregation, Stockport. The introductory service was conducted by the Rev. A. M. Creery. H. Coppock, Esq., as senior warden, addressed Mr. Pilcher, and presented to him the unanimous call of the Congregation. He said that by the trust-deed their Chapel was for the worship of one God, even the Father, and for instruction in the Christian religion. While the deed is so framed as to allow the utmost freedom, nevertheless they had positive religious opinions. They believed in God, and they also believed in Christ. The Rev. H. Green, of Knutsford, gave the right hand of fellowship to Mr. Pilcher. He said it was to Christian work over a free Christian Church he bid him welcome. The very principle contained in his greeting proclaimed the nature of that work, and the limits that were placed on their freedom. It was a just and rational, not an absolute liberty, which they possessed as ministers of Christ; they were under a Master, and that Master's word was their law, their creed, and their authority. Interpret his word without disciple being in subjection to disciple, or accountable to human tribunals; but if faithful ministers of Jesus Christ, they must interpret it serving his sovereignty over them, and the divine, immediately-of-God-inspired origin of his religion. That is not a philosophy, it is truth from God. Were he to give up this principle, he should consider himself no longer a Christian. He might admire the character and life of Christ; he should not be a believer in him. But Christian work in the spirit of the Redeemer and Saviour of the world—that was the great and wide field whitening for the

harvest, to which he bid him welcome. Mr. Pilcher, in replying, said that, holding positive views of religion himself, he did not object to find them clearly set forth in the warden's address, and said that he would do his utmost to be a faithful minister of Christ. The Rev. J. J. Tayler delivered an impressive and beautiful charge to the new minister, and the Rev. W. Gaskell addressed the Congregation on their duties.

At the close of the services a soiree was held, at which about 300 persons were present, H. Coppock, Esq., presiding.

KENT GENERAL BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

The annual meeting of this body was held at Cranbrook, on July 11th and 12th. The proceedings commenced on the evening of the 11th, when, after introductory services conducted by the Revds. R. Shelley and T. Farrier, a very thoughtful and valuable sermon was preached by the Rev. J. C. Means, from 1 Cor. iii. 11, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." On the following day the business meeting of the Churches took place at half-past nine; at eleven there were devotional services by Revds. E. Hammond and G. Grant, and an earnest and stirring sermon was preached by the Rev. Samuel Martin from Matt. vi. 10, "Thy kingdom come." At two o'clock a large company of ladies and gentlemen met at dinner, the Rev. R. Shelley in the chair. The Rev. J. Briggs, in replying to the "Kent General Baptist Association," remarked, that none were more desirous of disseminating Unitarian Christianity than the General Baptists, and referred to the historical fact that the first martyr for the Unitarian faith in England was a member of the Baptist body. The chairman, in giving the health of the preacher of the day, the Rev. S. Martin, expressed his personal indebtedness to that gentleman, and his feeling that the whole Unitarian body were under an obligation to him for the earnest religious life he had been the means of infusing into it. Mr. Martin responded in his usual happy style. The Rev. J. C. Means, in responding to his health as the preacher of the previous evening, dwelt upon the great value of the views which he had expressed, and his persuasion that the tendency to give up what is called traditional Christianity is the great danger of the present time. To him the question between those who hold a historical and miraculous Christianity, and those who approach the Gospel through intuition, was the question of questions, and the Church's standing or falling depended upon its decision.

KENT AND SUSSEX UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION.

The fifty-second anniversary of this Association was held at Chatham, on July 13. After devotional services by the Rev. R. Shelley, the Missionary of the Association, an excellent, and, in the best sense of that term, an evangelical sermon was preached by the Rev. H. Ierson, M.A., London. After the sermon, the members

and friends of the Association to the number of seventy-five, met at dinner, H. J. Preston, Esq., of London, in the chair. In reply to the toast of "The Kent and Sussex Unitarian Association," the Secretary, the Rev. R. E. B. Maclellan, read the annual report, which gave a satisfactory account of the missionary's labours, and he followed it by some encouraging statements respecting the operations of the Society. A resolution was proposed and seconded, that Mr. Ierson should allow his sermon to be printed; but that gentleman withheld his assent, to the disappointment of many who think with him, that Antisupernaturalism and Intuitionalism are running into extremes which peril the reception of a divinely-commissioned Jesus and a historical Christianity.

OBITUARY.

Death of the Rev. Alvan Lamson, D.D.—We learn, from *The Boston Christian Register*, that this venerable minister of the Unitarian Church died, at his residence, Dedham, on July 17, at the age of 72. "He was settled in Dedham for more than forty years, and, after his resignation, remained among his old parishioners, who retained their affection for him as well as a high appreciation of the value of his labours. His life was distinguished for its high moral purity, and his religious faith was calm and cheerful. His last days were those of the quiet scholar and devout Christian. Dr. Lamson gave much attention to ecclesiastical history, and his work on the Fathers, which came from the press revised by his fullest learning and ripest thought, is among the first books of its class in all the characteristics of careful scholarship and accomplished intellect."

Died, on July 30, at Abbey Hill, Whitehouse, Elizabeth, wife of John Curell, Esq., J.P., in the 80th year of her age.

Died, on Aug. 5, at Crumlin, Rose, relict of the late Alexander Barr.

Died, on Aug. 8, at her residence, Corporation Street, Belfast, Martha, widow of the late Alexander M'Laine.

Died, on Aug. 13, at Larne, Mr. James Barry, Princes Street, Belfast.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Communications for the Editor, to be addressed by post to Rev. C. J. M'Alester, Holywood; or, otherwise, to 45, Arthur Street, Belfast.

Orders for the work and business communications to be sent to the Agent of the Unitarian Society, 45, Arthur Street,

THE

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THE UNITARIAN POSITION.

A COMPARISON of the views held by Unitarians a few years ago, with those which many in the present day entertain, will show, in a remarkable manner, the change of opinion which has passed over a large portion of the denomination. Unitarians, till recently, were conspicuous as the defenders of the truth of the Christian religion, and contributed largely, by their learning and zeal, to meet the assaults of its enemies. It has often been the boast of our Church, that it presents the religion of Christ in a form so simple and rational that there is no weak point which the unbeliever may attack. The superstitions of the Church of Rome have exposed it to severe and merciless criticism; and so have the doctrines of the Trinity and of the Vicarious Atonement laid various Protestant Churches open to the attacks of the sceptic: and many a time we have heard the advocates of our simple faith boast of it as being free from those irrational and contradictory dogmas which had grown on Gospel truth, and as presenting to the inquirer a religion that was not only divine, but reasonable,—a message from God beautifully harmonizing with the revelations he has made of himself and his purposes in nature. Unitarianism, with a commendable boldness, cast aside the creeds and confessions which councils and synods had authorized, and sought in the Scriptures themselves a knowledge of Christ and his Gospel. Thus it drew forth the "long-lost truth" of God's unity from the heap of human speculations under which it had been hid, and held it up as the great central truth of religion. Unitarianism, heedless of the theories of divines respecting the nature of Christ, eagerly studied the simple narrative which the Evange-

lists had left of his life, death, doctrine, and resurrection; and, while it found no clear instruction respecting his nature, it saw, distinctly enough recorded, his subordination to God, and his mission from him; and though it could not, like other systems of Christianity, worship him as God, it yielded to him a devout homage as his well-beloved Son, and sought from him, as from an infallible teacher, instruction on the great subjects of human duty and human destiny. We feel a just pride in recalling to mind the great and honoured names which, in days gone by, this venerable faith numbered among its adherents and defenders. It was not, as some of its enemies represented it, "a feeble and conceited heresy," but, as we believe, the embodiment of that simple and ennobling religion which is exhibited in the New Testament; and its rational principles ministered to multitudes strength and comfort and hope. Need we remind our readers of the many examples which the Unitarian Church has presented of beautiful and useful lives, of sorrows meekly endured, and death calmly met through faith in Christ as the Son of God? That faith, endeared to us no less by the obloquy and persecution which so many have cheerfully borne for its sake, than for the ennobling and consolatory influences it is calculated to dispense, has, in the last few years, been sorely tried. The spirit of scepticism, which has penetrated every other Church, reformed and unreformed, has fastened on it, and threatens to destroy it. The progress of this spirit in the Unitarian Church is becoming more marked from month to month. Till recently, every answer that was published to the question, What is Unitarianism? represented it as distinctly teaching the divine authority of Revelation, and indignantly repudiated the imputation so often cast upon it of rejecting the divine mission of the Saviour. It would be easy to support this statement by extracts from the writings of many Unitarians, both those who hold the Arian, and those who hold the Humanitarian view of Christ's nature; and, so far as we know, no one was recognised by the Church, or professed himself to be Unitarian in his opinions, who did not admit the authority of Revelation. Now Unitarianism has ceased to be a distinctively Christian faith; and those who should be—

who were—among its most earnest apologists and defenders, tamely consent to receive into its fold, on equal terms, the Christian and the Deist. The steps towards this melancholy result have been few and rapidly taken. First, some persons of sceptical mind sought shelter under the "No creed" principle, flattering themselves that "No creed" might mean "No belief;" and that it gave them liberty to believe much, or little, or nothing, as they pleased. We do not stop to show that the opposition to human creeds, consistently maintained by our Non-Subscribing ancestors, implied no such latitudinarianism as has lately been engrafted on it. Then followed, under the dishonoured name of liberty, a concealment of doctrinal opinions, and an utter refusal, on the part of some, to say what they believed. "No man," they boastingly declared, "had any right to know what they thought on religious matters,—that was between themselves and their God,—they would resist every attempt to interfere with the liberty of thought;" and to such an extent was the system of concealment carried, that several of the most intelligent and zealous members of a Unitarian congregation in Ulster, said of their minister,—whose faith, nevertheless, they certified to be Christian,—that they did not know what his opinions were! It is very obvious that they did not care. Our readers have not forgotton the agitation that was produced in the North of Ireland by an effort, on the part of some, to resist this shuffling and skulking system, and to require from every candidate for a pulpit in their body an explicit acknowledgement of his belief in Revelation,—in short, a declaration that he was not a Deist, but a Christian. What declamation we had about "religious liberty," "freedom of thought," and so forth; and how unsparingly the charge of intolerance, bigotry, and persecution was hurled against those who simply desired to know, as they had a right to know, that the persons whom they were to recommend as fitted to preach the Gospel, believed the Gospel.

At this crisis, the organ of the denomination in London spoke out distinctly, and contended that in the Unitarian Church there must be no creed,—not even must the candidate for the ministry be required to signify his belief in the Divine mission of Christ. "No creed!" How

absurd such a statement, from a paper whose very profession of Unitarianism is itself a creed! But while it earnestly contended for liberty in one direction, it had no sympathy for it in another. A man might go to the verge of Deism, and farther, and still he had the sympathy of *The Inquirer*, but if once he passed into Trinitarianism, no matter how Christian in life, and how faithful to conscience, it had no interest in him. So warmly did that journal take up the cause of the "free inquirers," that to help them on, it compromised whatever of character it possessed, and became the unscrupulous tool of the party.

Thus proceeding step by step, this sceptical tendency seems to have culminated in the preaching, and subsequent publication, of a sermon by the Rev. William Binns, in which Deism, broad and undisguised, is advocated, under the Unitarian name, in connexion with the Unitarian denomination, and with the sanction and concurrence of other Unitarian ministers; and still further, in the avowal of the same opinion by one of the Editors of *The Unitarian Herald*. We might have expected that the other three Editors of that paper would have declined longer to co-operate in its management with one who had virtually abandoned Christianity, though he holds by the profession of Unitarianism,—but no such thing. In a later number, they distinctly inform us that they accept the miracles of Christ, (of course including his resurrection), as "open questions;" and intimate that the views propounded by Mr. Binns, and "W," who is one of themselves, are perfectly compatible with Unitarianism. Speaking, in the article just referred to, of those who belong to the school of Mr. Binns, they say:—

"Some of them are men who won wide respect by their earnestness and ability and truly Christian spirit; and however individuals may shrink from exchange of pulpits, and active co-operation with them, there is not only no general representative organization which could exclude them from the Unitarian position, but we venture to say there is not a single one of our various district associations in England which would seriously entertain the idea of excluding them from equal fellowship."

Such, then, is Unitarianism, as now expounded by the two weekly journals of the denomination; and in perfect agreement with such views is the following sentence from

a report of the Rev. J. W. Lake's sermon, preached a week or ten days ago at the Oldbury Double Lecture:—

"He advocated that broader view which includes the good, the benevolent, and the holy of all Churches and creeds, and even those who have *no special reverence for Christ and his teachings*," and recognises them all as Christian disciples."

Christian disciples "who have no special reverence for Christ and his teachings!" A Christian Church which includes good Jews, holy Mohammedans, and benevolent Hindoos! And such trash as this is preached from professedly Christian pulpits, and men whose cherished principles of religion rebel against it, bear with it under the idea that they are thus respecting freedom of thought.

The most extraordinary circumstance connected with the melancholy spread of such loose principles under the name of Unitarianism is, that those who look on Jesus much in the same light as on Socrates and Confucius, still speak of him as the *Christ*, and profess to receive the Scriptures, and statedly read them in their religious services. We have always been consistent advocates of freedom of thought, and we would be ashamed to injure or offend a fellow-man on account of any opinion he may entertain, no matter how erroneous we believed it to be. But if we understand anything of consistency, we think that our "advanced" brethren should cease to talk of *Christ*, when they have ceased to believe in him. Let them speak of Jesus of Nazareth, in whatever terms they may think just, but let them refrain from the employment of a term which distinctly implies the Divine mission of our Lord, and therefore contradicts their acknowledged convictions. Let them cease to read the Scriptures in the pulpit, or at least adopt the suggestion of one of their number, who candidly remarked that they might as well use any other good book. The Unitarian position,—how different it is now from what it was some years ago! The time has surely come, when those who reject the Trinity and its concomitant doctrines, and yet cling to the Gospel as a revelation from God, for the guidance and salvation of man, should withdraw from ecclesiastical connexion with those who scoff at the holiest truths of their religion, and speak of the resurrection of their Lord as a fable.

CONGREGATIONAL MEMOIRS.

No. II.—LARNE AND KILWAUGHTER—(*Continued from p.* 275.)

VII.—JAMES WORRALL, seventh minister, from 1796 to to 1807.

After the death of Mr. Sinclair, in 1795,* the choice of the Congregation was for a time distracted between the claims of two rival candidates for the vacant pulpit; neither of whom was eventually chosen. After considerable contention, the opposing parties united (as they did under similar circumstances in my own case) in favour of a third claimant, the gentleman of whose ministry I am now to give some account.

Mr. Worrall was a native of Limerick, and being by birth connected with the Established Church, he had been educated at Trinity College, Dublin, for the ministry of that Church. But, changing his religious views, he gave up this idea, and connected himself, as a probationer, with the Presbytery of Antrim. Pending his call to a congregation, he acted for a time as tutor in the family of Mr. Turnly of Rockport, with whom the late Mr. Farrell of Magheramorne, who was then a member of our Congregation, was connected by marriage; and it was this circumstance which introduced Mr. Worrall to Larne. On the recommendation of Mr. Farrell, a hearing of him for four Sundays was asked of the Presbytery, which being granted, and his services proving acceptable, Rev. Mr. Vance (of Belfast) attended in Larne, on the 10th of January, 1796, to take the minds of the people, and then and there received an unanimous call for Mr. Worrall. This call I cannot give. The first few words of it are

* During the last few years of Mr. Sinclair's ministry, the financial affairs of the Congregation seem to have fallen into confusion, as appears by the following entry in the old Session-Book:—"*August*, 1789.—At a meeting of the Committee, appointed by Presbytery for taking into consideration the state of the Stipend account, due by the Congregation to Rev. Mr. Sinclair, upon a serious and minute investigation thereof, we find the sum of *Two Hundred* Pounds sterling of arrears due to him at 1st Nov., 1789, which sum is settled and agreed on as the whole amount of arrear Stipend due by the Parish to the above date.—Robert Sinclair, *Minister*, Samuel Drummond, *Chairman*, Thomas Stewart, James Glasgow, Alex. Holmes, John Hay, Thomas Moore." I fear the minister had thrown off a good many odd pounds to bring down the debt to the even Two Hundred.

copied into the Session-Book, in Mr. Worrall's handwriting, but, strange to say, Mr. Worrall never found time to finish the work of transcription.* But although I cannot give a copy of Mr. Worrall's "call," I am able here to give "the questions" which were proposed to him by Rev Mr. Bryson of Antrim, previously to his ordination, on the 16th March, 1796. These "questions," which are still extant in Mr. Bryson's handwriting, are very curious when read by the light of modern "Non-Subscription;" and in this point of view they are well worth preservation. They are as follow:—

QUESTIONS PROSOSED BY REV. W. BRYSON OF ANTRIM, ON THE PART OF THE ANTRIM PRESBYTERY, TO REV. JAMES WORRALL, PREVIOUSLY TO HIS ORDINATION BY THAT PRESBYTERY IN LARNE, ON THE 16TH MARCH, 1796.

"1. DO YOU BELIEVE, SIR, that there is one Eternal Being called God, who is possessed of Almighty power, infinite knowledge, inviolable rectitude, and perfect goodness, who hath created all things, constantly preserves them, and disposes of them according to the counsels of His supreme wisdom?

"2. DO YOU BELIEVE that He exercises a moral government over mankind; that He attends to every part of their conduct; that He approves of them when they observe, and disapproves of them when they transgress, that law which He hath interwoven with their nature, and that He will reward or punish every one of them according to his deeds?

"3. DO YOU BELIEVE that when mankind, through the neglect and abuse of their nature and moral powers, and by indulgence to appetite and passion, had fallen into gross ignorance and wickedness, manifold calamities and miseries, and had become subject to death, God in His infinite mercy sent His own Son, the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, to reform, to comfort, and to save them?

"4. DO YOU BELIEVE that the Son of God appeared on earth in the likeness of man; that he taught, in the greatest purity, the doctrines and rules of piety and morality; that he set a perfect example of religious virtue in his own conduct; that he delivered the great and precious promises of pardon to the penitent, of direction and assistance to those who sincerely endeavour to learn

* The only other entry which I find in the Session-Book in Mr. Worrall's hand-writing is the following, which I give as recording the names of some of the Larne Elders in 1797:—"*May* 14, 1797.—The Session were of opinion that the money ought to be put to interest.—David Lyle, Patrick Crawford, William Boyd, Dan. Peden, Will. M'Dowell, James Glasgow. James Worrall, *Minister*." "It was also agreed to lend the money to Doctor Anderson, upon his and Dr. Ferris's joint security, for one year."

and do their duty, and of eternal bliss to all such as persevere until death in well-doing; that he suffered for us, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God; that after he had endured the death of the cross, and had lain in the grave till the third day, he rose to life again, and thus attested the Divine authority of his Gospel, and particularly the certainty of a resurrection; that he is now invested with all power in heaven and in earth, and that he will appear again to raise all mankind from the dead, to bestow rewards upon the righteous and to inflict punishment upon the wicked?

"5. Do YOU BELIEVE that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament constitute a perfect rule of faith and practice to all Christians, and that every one is obliged to study them diligently and impartially, and is bound by the duty which he owes to God to embrace that which he judges to be the true sense of them, however different from what is asserted in any Creed, or Confession, Commentary, or interpretation formed by man?

"6. Do YOU PROMISE, SIR, that you will, with care and diligence, examine the Holy Scriptures: that you will study to frame your sentiments, temper, and conduct by them; that to the best of your knowledge you will honestly and plainly preach the doctrines and laws of the Gospel; and that you will not keep back, or conceal from your hearers any thing which you judge conducive to their moral improvement and eternal salvation?

"7. ARE YOU DISPOSED, SIR, to live in peace with all men, and, as circumstances require and permit, to exercise friendly offices towards them, and to treat as your brethren all who, by professing to believe the Gospel and obeying its moral laws, appear to be the sincere disciples of Christ, though they differ from you in certain articles of faith and ceremonies of worship?"

These questions having been put to Mr. Worrall by Mr. Bryson, on the part of the Presbytery, and having been (we must presume) answered by the former gentleman to the satisfaction of his ordainers, he was then accordingly ordained. Of the other particulars of his ordination I can give no account, not having access to the records of the Antrim Presbytery.

Mr. Worrall's ministry in Larne was not long, continuing only for eleven years; nor can I say that it was, on the whole, beneficial to the Congregation. His health was always exceedingly delicate, and although at first he was very active in catechizing and discharging other Congregational duty, yet the impediment alluded to soon obliged him to restrict himself entirely to the preparation and performance of his pulpit services, which were most effective and popular. In private life he was, I have understood, an amiable and accomplished gentleman; but his lot in Larne was cast upon unhappy times.

and, I fear, amongst undesirable connexions. Politics were his break-neck, as they were in these days the break-neck of many another Presbyterian minister. I must add, that they were also the cause of his doing a serious and permanent injury to his Congregation. In politics Mr. Worrall was, while in Larne, an advanced Liberal. In this capacity, he, of his own mere notion, did away with an arrangement which had long existed on the Kilwaughter estate, and according to which the tenants on that property, of all religious persuasions, were bound in their leases to pay a portion of their rent to their landlord, under the name of "Stipend to the Protestant Dissenting Minister of Larne and Kilwaughter." That Mr. Worrall, in refusing to receive the Stipend when thus presented, acted under the influence of a disinterested delicacy, which would not allow him in certain cases to take what he thought the compulsory contributions of a few persons who did not attend on his ministry, I am very willing to believe. But Mr. Worrall might, or should, have known that by acting in this matter as he did, he really served no person but the landlord. He did not put a penny into the pocket of a single tenant of any religious persuasion, nor did he keep a single penny in a tenant's pocket which had previously been taken out. "The Kilwaughter stipend" was simply a rent-charge. *All* the money which the tenants paid, in any shape or form, for the occupancy of their land, was paid to *Mr. Agnew;* and to them it made not the slightest difference whether their landlord applied a part of it to the support of his minister, or applied it all to his own use, which of course he did when that minister refused to receive a portion of his share. But it was not the landlord who desired or made the change. The change was made at the express and urgent request of Mr. Worrall himself. The person who, in this matter, alienated a part of the inheritance of the future ministers of Larne and Kilwaughter, was the person who, of all others, should have been most active in defending that inheritance; for surely an incumbent should always look upon himself as being, in nature and in honour, the entrusted guardian of the rights of his successors. This consideration Mr. Worrall overlooked, and by acting as he did, in the case of "the

Kilwaughter Stipend," he exceeded, I think, his legitimate powers, and also did a permanent injury to his Congregation, as well as to all those who succeeded him in the Larne pulpit. He lowered the social position of his Congregation, by doing away with an arrangement which had existed for centuries; and which really wronged no man, whilst it materially contributed to their respectability and permanence. And towards his successors I must always think that he was guilty of a piece of actual, although, I am sure, unintentional injustice. He gave away what did not belong to him. With his own money he had a perfect right to do what he pleased, but with the money of those who were to succeed him, he should not have presumed to interfere. If he really felt uncomfortable in taking "the Kilwaughter Stipend," as collected by the landlord with the rent,* it was very proper that he should renounce it for *for himself*; but, in my mind, it was not at all proper that, in doing so, he should also permanently alienate a part of the inheritance of his successors, and leave them to obtain from the uncertain liberality of the voluntary principle a means of support which had come down to him in the form of a fixed and settled provision, and which he should have transmitted as he got it to those who were to come after him. Beyond the period of his own incumbency he had no right to sequestrate one farthing of the living.

But Mr. Worrall's intimate connexion with the unfortunate affairs of '98 gave even a severer blow to the prosperity of the Congregation than did his conduct in the matter above referred to. Into the political part of the question this is not the proper place to enter, but that Mr. Worrall's conduct in '98 seriously and permanently injured his Congregation, there can be no doubt. He was an United Irishman, as were most of the Presbyterian ministers of his day and neighbourhood. As such, he opened his pulpit to my unfortunate namesake, Rev. James Porter of Greyabbey, whilst he was making a tour through the Province, nominally delivering lectures on Natural

* A similar arrangement existed at the same time on the Ballygally and Blairmount Estates, in the Parish of Cairncastle, which also has fallen into disuse.

Philosophy, but really swearing in United Irishmen.* But I fear that Mr. Worrall went further still. I fear that, as a recognized leader of the insurgents in this neighbourhood, he was cognizant of measures contemplated, if not perpetrated, against hearers of his own, which should never have been connived at, or silently observed. by a minister of the Gospel of peace. On this most painful subject I forbear to dwell. Suffice it to add, that so far as Mr. Worrall was personally concerned, he paid the penalty of his disaffection by a short and not very severe confinement in Carrickfergus Gaol, where he was favoured with the company of most of his neighbouring brethren in the ministry; and that with respect to his Congregation, he drove away from it, at this time, and for ever, some of the most intelligent and influential families, who had for generations been connected with it, but who, being irreconcilably displeased by the political conduct of their minister on this occasion, left our meeting-house never to return. When Mr. Worrall took charge of the Congregation, the roll of members exhibited, amongst others, the names of Sam. Allen, William Montgomery, John Montgomery, George Casement, and G. A. M'Cleverty; when he resigned, those names, with one exception, were gone. Lieutenant M'Cleverty, after a temporary secession, returned to his old seat in the meeting-house,—Mr. Worrall having read from the pulpit an explanation, or a recantation, of his political opinions. But even "the Lieutenant" was never, I fear, cordially reconciled; and the others whom I have named certainly never came back.

The strangest part of the story, however, remains to be told. Mr. Worrall's constitution, which was very asthmatic, would not allow him to live in these Northern latitudes. He was therefore advised to go to a warmer climate, and accordingly, on May 27, 1807, he resigned charge of this Congregation, and removed to Clonmel, where he continued minister upwards of 17 years, and finally died on the 28th November, 1824. But in Clon-

* The text of Mr. Porter's Sermon on this occasion is still remembered in Larne,—"Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and contention therewith,"—surely a strange text to be chosen by a man who was organizing an armed insurrection.

mel he became politically a changed man. I have been told, on excellent authority, that he there went, in politics, to an extreme the very opposite of that which he had touched in Larne. Whether this revulsion of feeling was the consequence of a more intimate acquaintance with the practical working of that politico-religious system which, in the North, he had known only in theory and by sentiment, I cannot say. But of the fact itself there can be no doubt. Nay, I have been assured, that the violent language and manner in which he expressed his new-born Protestant zeal shocked even the Orange squires of Tipperary, who, living then at watch and ward, in the midst of the enemy, were not likely to be very squeamish in such matters.

Mr. Worrall married Jane, daughter of Duncan Sweeny of Larne, by whom he had a family. I have heard that on his death his children returned to the communion of the Established Church, which had been their father's Church in the days of his youth, and which, perhaps, it might have been as well for him if he had never left.

(*To be continued.*)

"PATIENT IN TRIBULATION."

"I am not pained, as I once was, to see the marks of an abiding grief; for most of our griefs wear out too fast, before they have fulfilled their purposes."—DR. CHANNING.

MOURNER, be not impatient with thy grief,
But treat it rather as an honoured guest
Sent on thy loving Father's high behest,
And commune with it in the sweet belief
That He who sent the wound will give relief,
Exchanging earthly bliss for heavenly rest.
The world distracts, but soothes not the depressed;
Vain are its comforts as its joy are brief.
We grieve the Spirit, when we rudely turn
To seek deliverance in some lower good
From its monitions, offered to the mood
Of penitence and prayer; if thou wilt learn
The message of God's angel, Sorrow,—wait
In faith and patience: thy reward is great.—I. A. C.

HALF-HOURS WITH A SUNDAY SCHOOL-CLASS.

A PARABLE.

The parables form a striking feature in the teaching of our Lord. As by the miracles which he wrought he arrested attention and inspired faith, so by the beautiful stories in which he embodied his doctrine, he won the ear of the thoughtless and the prejudiced, and, imperceptibly to themselves, instilled into their mind important lessons. The parables, as we might expect, borrow their character from the country in which they were spoken, and from the manners and customs of the people, but the great truths and duties which they convey are for all countries and all times. Commonly a parable embodies one important lesson, and while there are various particulars introduced to heighten the interest of the narrative, we may be led into error by endeavouring to make every particular significant of some spiritual truth. By thus overstraining our Lord's parables, they have been made by some commentators to teach very puerile, and sometimes very ridiculous lessons.

Our lesson is found in Luke x. 25—37, and contains the beautiful parable of the good Samaritan,—one of those lessons in the Master's teaching which, in mere infancy, the child learns to love, and which, in mature life, he never reads but with interest and profit. The words which require explanation are very few. "Lawyer," is one who made it his business to study the law of Moses, and undertook to explain it to the people. The lawyers also paid much attention to the numerous traditions of the elders, and our Lord on one occasion blames them with "thus making the word of God of none effect." "Eternal life." It is a matter of doubt whether the Jews, as a nation, had any distinct belief in a future life; certainly one sect among them had no belief in a resurrection, and it may have been that the lawyer had heard our Lord distinctly teach the doctrine of an eternal life, and therefore came asking how he might attain to it. "Jericho," was an important town of Judea, about fifteen or eighteen miles north-east of Jerusalem. Between the two places there was much intercourse, but the road was mountainous and wild, and the country very thinly inhabited. The

district was much frequented by robbers, who watched their opportunity to waylay and plunder travellers. "Priest," denotes one of a class of persons who served at the altar, and discharged the chief duties connected with religion. They were chosen from the family of Aaron, and were held in much reverence by the people. The principal duty of the "Levites," who belonged to the family of Levi, was to wait on the priests, and assist them in the service of the temple; so that they may be regarded as the ministers or servants of the priests. We have, in a previous lesson, explained the meaning of "Samaritan," and noticed the bitter hostility which existed between the Samaritans and the Jews." "Oil and wine" were considered by the Jews to possess healing properties, and in cases of sickness or injury were much used. "Two pence." The penny mentioned in the Gospels denotes a much larger sum than the same word used among us. Some idea of its value may be found from the reference in one of our Lord's parables to men being hired to work in a vineyard at the rate of "a penny a day." The coin referred to was worth about sevenpence half-penny of our money; but it should be borne in mind that "two pence," or fifteen pence of our money, was much more valuable at that early period than it is at present.

The several terms that seem to require explanation having been thus examined, the children are prepared to read the passage intelligibly and understand every word of it. They may read it in alternate verses, or one pupil may be selected to read the whole, and the teacher may give a brief picture of the scene which the parable presents. One of the lawyers, who had heard Jesus speaking earnestly to the multitude about the value of eternal life, and perhaps saying in solemn words, "the life is more than meat," or "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotton Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life,"—came to him, prompted, possibly, by no better feeling than curiosity, and said, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Our Lord directed him to the law, which he himself professed to teach, and asked him what it enjoined. The lawyer quoted the two great commandments of love to God and love to our neighbour, and Jesus replied, "This

do, and thou shalt live." The lawyer further said,—And who is my neighbour? The Lord did not directly answer his inqury, but told him of a man who was journeying from Jerusalem to Jericho, when, on a lonely part of the road, he was beset by a band of robbers, who stripped him of his cloak and tunic; and, while he vainly tried to keep the few pence which were concealed in his belt, was cruelly beaten by them, and left half-dead on the wayside. There he lay, utterly helpless; but an hour or two afterwards he heard the step of a mule approaching, and he hoped that relief was at hand. This hope rose higher, when, as the traveller came in sight, he saw that it was a priest, who had been serving in the temple in Jerusalem. When he came opposite to the unfortunate man he slackened his pace for a moment, cast a look at him across the road, and passed on. Strange, that one who taught religion to the people should thus be indifferent to the claims of distress. Sadness settled on the mind of the poor sufferer when he felt himself thus neglected: but soon after a footstep was heard; he looked up, and saw a man coming towards him. Patiently he waited his approach, and was filled with hope of aid when he saw it was a Levite; but how his soul sank within him when, after stopping to look on him, and seeing his helpless and sad plight, he passed by on the other side! Despair took possession of his soul; amid the pain of his wounds, and the gathering twilight, the image of home and loved ones there, rose before his mind, but only to render him more wretched. As thus in suffering and sadness he lay, another step was heard; and presently he saw before him one whose face he knew not, but whose accent, when inquiringly he spoke to him, was that of a Samaritan. From him he could look for no kindness,—to speak to him would be profanation. Yet gently the stranger accosted him, and finding he was severely hurt, he took out the small vial of oil and wine which, with prudent forethought, he carried for emergencies, and poured a little of the healing mixture on the wounded parts; then he carefully bound them up with his handkerchief and the girdle with which his cloak was fastened, helped the poor man on his mule, and walked slowly by his side till he reached the next inn. Through the night he watched him with the care of a

brother, and ere he proceeded on his journey in the morning, he begged the host to treat him kindly, leaving money to pay the probable cost, and promising to repay any further expense that might be required. "Which, now, of these three," said our Lord, "was neighbour to him that fell among the thieves?" The lawyer at once replied, "He that showed mercy." And while, in the simple narrative, the lawyer felt the appeal of humanity, our Lord enforced the great lesson which he had taught, by the simple exhortation, "Go and do thou likewise."

The one great duty here enjoined is, that of being kind to all who need our kindness, without distinction of rank, colour, creed, or country. Children may be taught that, as no differences of creed or race which existed between Jews and Samaritans should prevent them from being kind to one another, so no varieties of church or party should prevent us from cherishing kindly sentiments, and doing kindly acts, to all whom it may be in our power to benefit. No lesson did our Lord more distinctly teach; no lesson do we need more carefully to study and practise.

THE LATE MEETING OF THE PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY OF LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE.

We are requested by a correspondent to recur to the late proceedings of this old and (hitherto at least) most respectable body, as having an important bearing upon the character and prospects of English Unitarianism. We have already, in our August number, expressed our views very nearly to the same purport; but, agreeing with him in the opinion that our Unitarian brethren in England are bound, in fidelity to the great cause which they advocate, to repudiate sentiments so revolting to every religious mind, we willingly give the following abstract of his remarks. These apply to the remarkable sermon preached by Mr. Binns, by appointment made at the preceding meeting. It was, therefore, no extemporaneous effusion, where the excitement of the occasion might have called forth unguarded expressions. It was deliberately prepared, and was admitted to be a very

careful and highly-finished composition. Our correspondent takes the report from *The London Inquirer*, because its correctness has not been disputed, and it has a greater and more mischievous currency among the Unitarian population than the sermon itself, which perhaps few will ever read.

The outline given of this discourse states that it "started with the assertion that all speculative questions were open, and that all theological questions were speculative." Now, does it not necessarily follow from these premisses, that the Being of God, which is surely a theological question, is also speculative, and therefore open? What, then, is the meaning of an "open" question? We may obtain an answer by the instance of the Roman Catholic question in Parliament. With one administration this was agreed to be an open question, *i.e.*, that one member of the administration might take one view, and another the opposite, without injury to their harmony and co-operation. Apply the principle to the Being of God as an "open" question, and you may have one member of the Provincial Assembly maintaining, and another questioning or denying, the existence of God, without prejudice to their union as members of the same deliberative assembly of Christian ministers! According to this report, the preacher further said, "that all human interpretations of God, were approximately true." From this it follows that Pantheism is approximately true!

According to this outline the preacher maintained, that "Jesus" was neither Messiah nor Logos; but still, the glory of Judaism, the temple of God, and the foremost soul in history. Now, according to St. Paul, in 2 Cor. vi. 16, we are all the temples of the living God, and, therefore, as far as this epithet goes, we are on a par with "Jesus," and, if the report be correct, he follows Rénan in not calling him "Christ."

And then, as to the question whether such conclusions as he wishes to establish, "meant simply the death of Christianity, or merely a crucifixion of the body [viz., of Christianity] preparatory to a resurrection and dominion of the spirit," the preacher was of opinion that much might be said in favour of the latter, viz., the crucifixion of the body of Christianity, meaning thereby the destruction of

the whole external frame of the Christian religion. This sentiment, then, preceded by the assertion that miracles disappear in the universality of the Divine law, forms the fundamental belief of a minister of the Gospel; and this, it is to be observed, involves the "disappearance" of the resurrection of Christ as being a miracle.

Our correspondent remarks, that these are the sentiments of a discourse delivered to an assembly of ministers and lay delegates, comprising some of the most important congregations in the Unitarian body; the meeting having consisted of forty ministers and fifty delegates, representing thirty three congregations. How was this manifesto of his religious (?) sentiments received by the body? Not according to the usual precedent, but by a special vote of the "*best thanks*" of the Assembly, therein recorded, for the edification of all their future meetings: and it appeared, from a subsequent remark of Mr. Binns, that he would have scorned a simple vote of thanks, and that nothing short of the *best* thanks would have been accepted as due to him for his discourse.

It is true that the Assembly was not unanimous, but still, it is a recorded vote, and, as if to prevent all mistakes, the author has published this "*best thanked*" sermon as a model for future imitation or emulation. The mover of this extraordinary vote, which was preceded by what, we hope, was an unprecedented, as it certainly was an indecorous, vote of thanks for a prayer, said that the thanks of the meeting were due "for the *very suggestive* sermon of that morning, for the very plain and manly way in which he had spoken out" ("very suggestive" certainly, suggesting the harmlessness of Atheism, Deism, Pantheism, denial of Christ's claims and of his resurrection). Another minister, who had not heard a word of the sermon, supported the vote because they were not there to judge of the doctrine, but of the composition of the discourse; if it were elegantly composed it deserved their best thanks; if it were a careless, indifferent sermon, in which there had been no thought, it deserved no thanks. It was a matter of no importance to them what the doctrine or thoughts were. Query, would they have given their best thanks to as careful and conscientious a discourse in defence of the Trinitarian doctrine? The

amendment of one minister, who differed from the sentiments of the discourse, and has since declared that he considered the spirit, drift, and meaning of the discourse to amount to a disowning of Christianity as a divine revelation, was simply to omit the word "best" and retain the word "thanks." A lay delegate seconded this amendment, declaring that he never knew a more inopportune discourse. Another lay delegate considered the discourse as attacking principles dear to him as life, and yet gave his "hearty thanks" to Mr. Binns for this attack. In spite of all this, and of other disclaimers, the vote of "best thanks" was passed by a large majority, and with applause. Can it be that the many highly respected and able ministers, who have laboured so long and zealously in the cause of revealed religion, or the heads of families who value the Gospel and desire their children to hold by its principles, will patiently acquiesce in these proceedings as characteristic of the Unitarian denomination? That highly respectable body, the Unitarian Protestant Dissenters of England, whose forefathers were so distinguished as defenders of the Christian faith, should not allow their attention to be diverted from this important object, or patiently see the foundations of revealed religion sapped, by clap-trap fallacies about tests, creeds, subscription, and so forth, that form the stock-in-trade of *The Inquirer*, *Unitarian Herald*, and their coadjutor, the Presbytery of Antrim.

In thus giving the substance of remarks communicated by a correspondent, whose name, if published, would carry weight in all sections of our Church, we need scarcely add, that resistance to the noxious principles on which he fixes attention has been a main object with this periodical. Resistance to what we consider the first step in the tendency towards these principles,—viz., refusing to consider belief in the Christian Revelation a necessary bond of fellowship among ministers of the Gospel,—was the cause of the separation of the Northern Presbytery of Antrim, and has exposed that body to much obloquy and abuse.

RELIGIOUS VIEWS OF ATHANASE COQUEREL, JUN.

[We are indebted to the *New York Christian Inquirer* for the following translation of passages from a recent discourse of Athanase Coquerel, jun., exhibiting his leading thoughts respecting God, Man, Christ, and the Bible. It will be seen by these extracts, that while the views of this eminent French preacher are distinctly Unitarian, they are, at the same time, essentially Christian.—Ed. Ch. Un.]

OF GOD.

God is not a being inactive, absent, indifferent about his works, a stranger to his creatures, deaf to our prayers. He is not the God of the Pantheists, a God blind and obscure, in whom everything is mixed up together, both evil and good. He is a God personal and living, the creator of the heavens and the earth,—the God who said let there be light, the God who declares himself in the Old Testament, I am he who am the God of the prophets,—who is our refuge and retreat. Our God is present in his providence, governing the world, mingling without ceasing through his Spirit and his action in everything, present to the conscience speaking within us. In short, God is our Father. He goes to meet those whom he sees coming from a distance. To go to God, to return to God, that is religion. It is thus I have always placed him before you. Religion is a bond between God and man. It is the bringing together the connections which ought to exist between God and us. Everything which brings man nearer to God is religious. That which does not contribute directly to place man in connection with God, may be useful, but it is not the essence, the foundation of religion. That is why the miracles are only accessories. Religion, strictly speaking, I repeat, consists in placing ourselves in contact, in connection, as far as posssible, with God. We have infinite need of an ideal of perfection, and we must not allow our ideal to remain vague. We want a personal, living God, and religion is a real connection with him, grand as he is, and limited as we are.

OF MAN.

Man is not an innocent being; man is a sinner. It is not possible to imagine him free from moral evil. We

find within ourselves not only occasional faults, committed at such a moment or hour, but sin, moral evil, a tendency to evil. From this internal and universal fact, there results for man the necessity of a rising again, of a transformation. This is what the Scriptures call conversion. It is a spiritual birth, regeneration. But man is a slave, bound by a yoke, who needs to be set free, who cannot succeed alone in shaking off or breaking his chain. He wants to be delivered, he needs a liberator who will save him, who will deliver him—it is Jesus Christ. It is his work. I have not taught you, I acknowledge, the dogmas that are called substitution, vicarious satisfaction, expiation by blood. I have not taught you that above all we need to be saved from punishment—a doctrine that is equally wanting in depth, in moral value, and in truth. Every punishment coming from God is a blessing, is intended to amend us. To be saved from punishment is not to be cured and set free. What a man needs to be saved from is evil, is sin. Jesus, by his whole life as well as by his death, by all his teachings and by his example, by the influence which he exercised over his contemporaries and upon the men of future ages, has communicated a new life to humanity. He has infused his own spirit into it, he has animated it with his own life, and he will never cease to nourish it, but will fill it more and more with his life-giving doctrine. Jesus saves us from evil, from sin. He announces pardon. He has manifested it, he has secured it for man. He is the way, the truth, and the life. The Christian religion consists in going to God through Jesus, who is the highest expression of it, not only because Jesus is united to the Father, but because he unites to the Father those who live his life, those who think and desire as he does.

THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

I have not told you, concerning Jesus, what he has not said of himself. I have spoken to you of him as he has spoken of himself. There has never been quoted, there never can be quoted, a single passage of Scripture in which Jesus said, "I am God;" but he has said over and over that he is the Son of God; that is, he is in the closest and most holy union with God, and he has a right to say, He who has seen me has seen my Father. The divine

shone forth in Jesus. Jesus is not a great man, a great moralist, a Socrates, superior to Socrates. No. In Jesus we see, we feel, and we acknowledge the presence and the action of him who is divine. It is that which distinguishes him from all; it is that which inspires our admiration, our gratitude, our love, and forces us to acknowledge him to be the true Mediator. The life, the death, the labours, the sentiments of Christ, are in full accord with the divine holiness. Jesus is God translated for our benefit. What God is and wants us to become is demonstrated in the life and death of Jesus.

As regards the Bible, M. Coquerel, while admitting the great principle of a progressive revelation, that the New Testament is superior to the Old, and that the apostolic words ought to be subordinate to the direct words and teaching of Jesus, adds:—There reigns from one end of the Bible to the other, especially in the New Testament, a great breath of God. The Spirit from on high makes itself felt among us. It is also the historic source to which we must always have recourse, and because we profess to read the Bible with discernment, it ought not to be said that we do not seek or find the truth there. Man has no right to read the Bible with his eyes shut. Let us remember the English philosopher who said that to want to make use of revelation when abandoning reason, is like taking a telescope and shutting one's eye before putting it near, so that the instrument which was designed to lengthen the sight, was of no use at all.

REVIEW.

A HANDBOOK OF NEW TESTAMENT NAMES, FOR USE IN SUNDAY-SCHOOLS. By THOMAS BOWRING. Belfast: Northern Sunday-School Association. 1864.

WE welcome this little volume as an additional help to Sunday-School teachers in their efforts to explain and illustrate the New Testament narratives. It is from the pen of the Rev. Thomas Bowring, who has contributed several other valuable works to our Sunday-School literature;—and it is published by the Northern Sunday-School Association. Its object is to explain the various

terms which are employed in the Scriptures to express classes, sects, and offices, and to give a brief sketch of the principal persons mentioned in the New Testament. The language is simple, and the explanations brief, but sufficiently full, and, as far as we have observed, extremely correct. Teachers who have not the opportunity of consulting larger volumes will find in this little manual all that they require, in order to render the terms which occur in the Gospel narrative intelligible to their pupils. The Association has wisely issued it at so low a price as to place it within the reach of those who desire to possess it.

HOW WE LEARN.

Great truths are dearly bought. The common truth,
Such as men give and take from day to day,
Comes in the common walk of easy life,
Blown by the careless wind across our way.

Bought in the market, at the current price,
Bred of the smile, the jest, perchance the bowl;
It tells no tales of daring or of worth,
Nor pierces even the surface of a soul.

Great truths are greatly won. Not found by chance,
Nor wafted on the breath of summer dream;
But grasped in the great struggle of the soul,
Hard-buffeting with adverse wind and stream.

Not in the general mart, 'mid corn and wine;
Not in the merchandise of gold and gems;
Not in the world's gay hall of midnight mirth;
Not 'mid the blaze of regal diadems;

But in the day of conflict, fear, and grief,
When the strong hand of God, put forth in might,
Ploughs up the subsoil of the stagnant heart,
And brings the imprisoned truth-seed to the light.

Wrung from the troubled spirit, in hard hours
Of weakness, solitude, perchance of pain,
Truth springs, like harvest, from the well-ploughed field,
And the soul feels it has not wept in vain.—H. Bonar.

A FREE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

[We have much pleasure in publishing the following interesting sketch of the Free Christian Church at Swindon, Wilts, from the pen of its earnest and indefatigable pastor.—Ed. Ch. Un.]

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE CHRISTIAN UNITARIAN."

Dear Sir,—Although this will be the first time that I have written to you, in your editorial capacity, you will, I hope, allow me to ask your insertion, in the pages of *The Christian Unitarian*, of a short statement of our life and doings in the important railway town of New Swindon, on the Great Western Railway.

Three years ago, last May, I came to this place, in company with two friends who are living with me, for the purpose of commencing the work of disseminating the great facts and principles of Christianity as they are to be found in the New Testament, and as they are illustrated and enforced by the words, and works, and life, and Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. For years previous to that time, I had longed for a platform from which I could speak, as a free man, to free men and women, and from whence we could "prove all things," and "hold fast" only "that which is good." I believed then, and I do still believe, that all creeds contain some truth, and that no creed contains all the truth, and that he is the wise man who endeavours to separate from the various faiths the truths which underlie them, and who speaks and acts, not as the member of a sect, but as a member of that great Catholic Church, whose members are to be found in all communions, and whose periods of time embrace all ages, from Adam downwards. I had *this* thought, too, that he who is the acknowledged member of a sect, and who speaks in the name of that sect, is, rightly or wrongly, made responsible by the general public for all and everything which that sect may say or do, even though he, personally, may dissent most strongly from many of those sayings and doings. Hence the importance of a perfectly free position, where a man can hold out the right hand of fellowship to all who sympathise with him, and where he can be free to dissent without compromise of principle or motive. The good providence of God at length brought to my aid just the friends whom I could most desire, who shared my hopes, and who were willing to prove the reality of their sympathies by sacrifice. A place of worship, capable of accommodating five hundred persons, was erected, and from the very first day (4th August, 1861) upon which that place was opened, down to this very hour, it has been my privilege to speak to a congregation almost, if not quite, unique in its character, and which has been the joy and reward of my life. The persons who now form my regular congregation are, almost all, of the mechanic class, employed in the railway works under the Great Western Railway Company. Taking them as a whole, they are intelligent, thoughtful, and good-charactered; indeed those who have known them the longest, and are the best able to judge, say that they are the cream of the working people in this place. At the same time, it ought to be stated,

that before the opening of the church, nearly eleven-twelfths of them were outside of all churches, while many of them were positive unbelievers or sneering sceptics. Their Sundays were passed n the home, the street, the field, or on the canal-side, while some f them tried to gratify their social nature by the company of the e er shop, and the debates which not unfrequently take place there. At the commencement of my work, I told them that our place of meeting was a *Church*, and not a lecture hall or a debating club; that it was a *Christian* Church, proclaiming its allegiance to the Lord Jesus as the divinely-appointed Teacher, Master, and Saviour of man, from whose Word there was no appeal, whose works were real and divine, and who was set forth in the pages of Scripture as the personal revelation of God, and man's perfect example; and, finally, that it was a *Free* Christian Church, not, of course, free from Christ, but free from the control of any sect or association, free to the doubter and the denier, not that they might continue to doubt or to deny, but that their doubts might be solved, and their denials changed into rational and happy belief; in fact free to all, not because they were of this or that class, of this or that sect, but because they were men and women, loved by God the Father, died for by Jesus his Son, and called to holiness and a loving service by the Holy Spirit.

Three years have now passed away, and such results as the eye of man may see may here be told—results which necessitate gratitude to the Father of all mercies for the past, and quiet hope in Him for the future. Many a sceptic has ceased to sneer and to doubt, many an unbeliever has come to see a glory and fitness in the Christianity of Christ of which he never before dreamed; the swearer has ceased to swear, the drunkard has become sober, the debauchee has become chaste, the home of strife and misery has become the home of peace and pleasure; while husbands and wives, parents and children, and masters and servants, have been awakened to a newness of life in strange contrast to all their former experiences. We have a Day School, under the mastership of a most accomplished Christian gentleman, and a Sunday School, which, although commenced less than three months ago, bids fair to be a large and useful one. Our *morning* congregations are not, and will not be for some time to come, large, because time alone can lead the people to form the habit of attending public worship *twice* in the same day. The average morning congregations may be set down at about one hundred. The *evening* congregations are always more than three times, and frequently more than four times, that number; and it would not, I think, be possible to find any other gathering of the same kind more earnest or attentive to all that is going on.

We have just had our third anniversary. The Rev. John Page Hopps, of Dukinfield, delivered his lecture on Theodore Parker in our Church, on Saturday evening, the 6th August. In a wise and loving way he led us through the details of Parker's life and theology, paying glowing tributes to that great man's nobleness and worth, but discriminating between the truths he taught and the errors and exaggerations which were connected with them. On the following day (Sunday), Mr. Hopps delivered two beauti-

ful and inspiring sermons, from Heb. vi. 19, and Rom. i. 16. The Holy Communion was observed after the evening service, and throughout the day it was felt that a hallowed influence was being diffused over the minds and hearts of all.

So we stand, with no vain glorying in our own works, which are not our own, but, in so far as they are good, the Lord's alone; with freedom, in the truest and most Christian sense of that term; and with a solemn responsibility resting upon us to preserve, as far as we are able, the sound and the service of a pure Gospel, apart from all sects, and yet in communion with all of every name who love the one common Father. Recent events have placed it beyond a doubt that there are those "who profess and call themselves Christians," who are yet contented to place Christ and Christianity upon a common level with other teachers and other systems of religion. Let us "judge not," lest we be judged; but let such of us as believe in the *divine mission* of Christ and the *absoluteness* of Christianity, speak no uncertain words, but give our testimony modestly, firmly, hopefully. "The prophet that hath a dream let him tell the dream;" but let him that hath God's word speak that word faithfully; for the Lord himself hath said that the chaff is as nothing to the wheat.—I am, dear Sir, yours very heartily,

FREDERIC ROWLAND YOUNG.

SWINDON, 10*th Sept.*, 1864.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH *THE LONDON INQUIRER.*

ON the publication in *The London Inquirer* of the Editorial article in which Mr. M'Alester was so unjustly represented as attempting to impose a new Unitarian test, he wrote to the Editor, inquiring in what part of his correspondence with Mr. Heron he had made any such attempt. The reply was exceedingly vague, and showed, as the article itself did, a total ignorance of the principles of Non-Subscription; but it was accompanied with an intimation, that the Editor "declines to open his columns to correspondents who set up a standard of 'Orthodox Unitarianism,' and indirectly impute Deism or Infidelity to those who differ from their own theory of Christianity." Notwithstanding this communication from the Editor, which meant, if it meant anything, that no letters should be admitted into the columns of *The Inquirer*, save from those who, whatever their own opinions might be, were prepared to regard as "open questions" the great distinguishing principles of Revelation, Mr. M'Alester addressed to him the following letter, and demanded its publication as a matter of justice:—

"*To the Editor of the Inquirer.*

"SIR,—I gather from your publication of the 13th instant—what I failed to learn by application to yourself,—that the test which you accuse me of introducing, and which you represent as a 'New Unitarian Test' is no other than *the Scriptures our Rule of Faith.* That it is Unitarian I am disposed to believe, though in that opinion all who adopt it would not agree with me; but why you should call

it *new*, I am at a loss to conceive, for it is certainly as old as the Reformation, and has been the foundation principle of our Non-Subscribing Church for about a century and a half. You call it a test, and perhaps correctly; but some who abjure all tests, and would turn away in disgust, even from a homœopathic creed, swallow it quite readily. Such are your friends of the Antrim Presbytery, a body of which you said some time ago that it 'is the only hope of Liberal Christianity in the North of Ireland;' the basis of their constitution, and their watchword in all their recent struggles was—'*the Scriptures our Rule of Faith.*' I trust, therefore, you will correct the error into which you have fallen in giving me the credit of introducing such a test. Give me any honour to which you think I am fairly entitled, but to this I have certainly no claim.—Your obedient servant,

"C. J. M'ALESTER.

"HOLYWOOD, COUNTY DOWN, *Aug.* 22, 1864."

The Editor yielded to Mr. M'Alester's demand and published this letter, accompanying it, however, with the following comment:—

"We were not aware that either in England or in Ireland Unitarian laymen were required to subscribe the above test before they could be regarded as Christians, until Mr. M'Alester introduced the practice in his recent correspondence with Mr. Heron."

Principles, it would appear, according to *The Inquirer*, are only for the clergy, and not for the laity. We, in our simplemindedness, conceived that all who voluntarily attached themselves to any religious body were regarded as accepting its fundamental principles. Mr. M'Alester, however, did not exclude all from a title to the name of Christian who refused to accept the Scriptures as the sole Rule of Faith. To do so would be to unchristianize the whole church of Rome, and all the Protestant churches which adopt creeds and confessions. We know that he recognizes as Christian in principle all who accept Jesus as the Christ of God. It seemed that the correspondence was closed, when, after the lapse of a fortnight, the following letter appeared from the pen of the Rev. John Porter:—

"*To the Editor of the Inquirer.*

"DEAR SIR,—Though reluctant to appear before your readers farther than I have already done in our unhappy controversy, yet as the last number of *The Inquirer* contains no notice of Mr. M'Alester's letter published in the previous one, I feel myself bound to offer thereon a few remarks.

"The object of Mr. M'Alester is to rebut 'your accusation of introducing a new Unitarian Test,' by citing as his justification the example of the Antrim Presbytery. His words are, 'The new Unitarian test is no other than *the Scriptures our Rule of Faith.*' . . . 'But why you should call it *new* I am at a loss to conceive, for it is certainly as old as the Reformation, and *has been the foundation principle of our Irish Non-Subscribing Church* for about a century and a half.' . . . 'But some who abjure all tests, and would turn away in disgust from a homœopathic creed, swallow it quite readily; such are your friends of the Antrim Presbytery.'

. . . '*The basis of their constitution, and their watchword* in all their recent struggles, was, *the Scriptures our rule of faith.*'

"Now, Sir, to what inevitable conclusion does Mr. M'Alester's argument lead? Surely to this: that the two Presbyteries have precisely the same constitution, and are identical in creed even to the very letter; consequently, that the charge so often made against us, of having '*changed the principles by which the Antrim Presbytery has been guided since its formation,*' is utterly unfounded.

"But this is not all. Mr. M'Alester has often and unmercifully accused the ministers of this body of Deism and Infidelity. But this charge, if his letter is to be accepted as reliable, is unfounded also, for men cannot be fairly accounted Deists or Infidels who take as the basis of their constitution, and watchword, '*the Scriptures our rule of faith.*' Nor is this the whole. For if the Antrim Presbytery makes 'the Scriptures our rule of faith,' its basis and watchword, then the disruption of that body by Mr. M'Alester and party was an act not less unconstitutional than their charge of infidelity against its members was untrue; and, therefore, the proper course in such circumstances for Mr. M'Alester and friends to take is, to ask pardon of their brethren for the hard things they have spoken and done against them.

"I think I have said enough to show the suicidal character of Mr. M'Alester's letter, and how it convicts himself and party (admitting the accuracy of his statements). But the statements of the greatest inconsistency are not accurate. His own 'foolish resolution' (to quote the words of Judge Smith), which has been adopted as a fundamental principle by the Northern Antrim Presbytery, contains *a creed;* and besides, what he declares to be the 'basis and watchword' of the Antrim Presbytery is neither the one nor the other. Our basis and watchword is not 'the Scriptures our rule of faith,' as he alleges; but *the sufficiency of Scripture as a rule of faith, and the right of private interpretation.* This has been our constitution from the first: and the Master of the Rolls declared from the bench that we appear 'never to have removed from it one iota,' while of the constitution of the Northern Antrim Presbytery he affirmed, on the contrary, that it contained a creed.

"The truth is, the Northern Presbytery of Antrim has adopted a test, and become, in consequence, a creed-bound Church. Its creed I admit to be a very tiny one—homœopathic, in fact; but then it is, notwithstanding, a creed in principle and in fact, not less emphatically than the Westminister Confession, or the Decrees of the Council of Trent.—Believe me, dear Sir, very truly yours,

Sept. 6th, 1864. JOHN PORTER.

To this letter Mr. M'Alester forwarded the following reply:—

"*To the Editor of the Inquirer.*

"SIR,—I am glad that the Rev. John Porter overcame his reluctance to appear again before your readers in our unhappy controversy, and that he wrote the letter which you published in your last number; for it goes to corroborate my statement, and to show that the principle which you strangely represented as 'a New Unitarian Test,' introduced by myself,—'a test which ignores all the re-

sults of modern Biblical science, and raises up the Scriptures, without discrimination, as an infallibly Divine authority,'—has been the principle of your favourite Antrim Presbytery since its foundation. The distinction which you endeavour to establish between ministers and laymen in the case has really no foundation. If the acknowledgment of this principle involved the ignoring of all the results of Biblical science, which I am far from believing it does, it would surely be as objectionable to the clergy as to the people. In our Church there is no test to which Christians must submit in order to be seatholders, or even communicants. We welcome all who may join our congregations, and, strange as it may seem to you, even our communion table is free; but any one, minister or layman, who participates in the management of our church affairs, while he is opposed to our fundamental principles, is acting a most disingenuous and reprehensible part.

"Mr. Porter finds fault with my wording of the principle under consideration, and alleges that the basis of the Presbytery of Antrim is not 'the Scriptures our rule of faith,' but 'the sufficiency of the Scriptures as a rule of faith.' The distinction, however, between these expressions is too refined for ordinary readers, and scarcely merits consideration. But if I had access to the minutes of his Presbytery, I think I could prove to him that I am *literally* correct; and, in the absence of such proof, I would refer him to one of his own speeches at the Ballyclare soiree, in February last, in which he informs his audience that 'the founders of the Presbytery resolved that every man should hold his own opinion, and could only ask,—*Do you consider the Scriptures as the only rule and guide of faith?*'

"Turning from the subject under discussion, Mr. Porter passes on to the controversy which resulted in the disruption of the Antrim Presbytery, and he endeavours to show that I and those with whom I acted, were inconsistent in seceding from the body, while we agreed with the other members in regarding 'the Scriptures, our rule of faith' as the basis of our Non-Subscribing Church. Were I not afraid of trespassing unreasonably on your space, I might show, as I have done elsewhere, that there was no inconsistency in the course we took, but that, on the contrary, we had abundant ground to justify our secession. The Rev. Samuel Haliday, one of the most distinguished of the original members of the Presbytery, distinctly states that, in his opinion, members are not obliged to ordain a candidate for the ministry merely on his acknowledging the fundamental principle of Non-Subscription, but that they may demand some rational satisfaction that the person to be ordained understands the Christian doctrine. And if Mr. Haliday and his co-presbyters thought something more than a mere profession of their belief in the Scriptures necessary, still more does it seem to be so now, when some profess to receive the Scriptures, and yet place them only on a level with the traditions, history, and literature of Greece and Rome. And when now you learn, if you did not know before, that I am one of those 'intolerant and inquisitorial' persons, who attach importance to something more than the acknowledgment of the Scriptures as a rule of faith, you will, I hope, admit that I made no attempt to impose my own 'special and narrow interpretations of Christianity' on Mr. Heron,

and will, with that candid and honourable spirit so characteristic of Englishmen, express regret for the very unjust representations you have given of my conduct.

"Mr. Porter alleges that the Presbytery to which I have the honour to belong, is 'creed-bound,' because it requires candidates for the Christian ministry to profess a belief in the Divine mission of our Saviour; for he says that such a requirement is as much a creed as is the Westminister Confession, or the Decrees of the Council of Trent. Perhaps he is right, for wise men differ about what constitutes a creed or a test. Mr. Porter maintains that 'the sufficiency of the Scriptures as a rule of faith' is no test, while you, who are no less an authority than he, contend that it is. I argue that a belief in the Divine mission of Christ is not a test, in any proper sense of the term, while Mr. Porter mantains that it is; and I really believe that Judge Smith,—no mean opinion,—looking at the case through a lawyer's spectacles, would give it as his judgment, that when Jesus required of his disciples an acknowledgment of him as the Christ, he was imposing on them a human creed!

"One statement in Mr. Porter's letter I have read with much regret. He says—'Mr. M'Alester has often and unmercifully accused the ministers of this body of Deism and Infidelity.' He has before, in the excitement of a public meeting, brought a similar accusation against me, with what reason I am at a loss to know. I have stated plainly enough that, in my mind, some who occupy Unitarian pulpits are, in their opinions, essentially deistical; and many who once thought such a statement on my part too strong, are now convinced of its accuracy; but those who were my brethren in the Presbytery of Antrim, and with whom for so many years I was accustomed to exchange pulpits, I am not conscious of having ever represented as Deists and Infidels. That the principle of Church government which they have advocated, and on which the minority seceded from them, would open the ministry of the Church to unbelievers, I am satisfied; but that is very different from saying that they are themselves Deists; though it does certainly exhibit them as wonderfully liberal. Mr. Porter has, however, deliberately stated in your columns that I have often accused him of Deism. I as deliberately declare that I am not conscious of having even once done so, either in public or in private; and I call upon him to substantitate his statement, or to withdraw it.—Yours, &c.,

"C. J. M'ALESTER.

"HOLYWOOD, COUNTY DOWN, *Sept.* 14, 1864."

Mr. M'Alester's letter only appeared in *The Inquirer* of the 24th ult.: it was not accompanied by any explanation or criticism on the part of the Editor; and it remains to be seen whether he will make amends for the injustice he has done. That Mr. Porter will endeavour to substantiate the accusation referred to in the last paragraph, is probable;—but we cannot believe that he will succeed: for we know that Mr. M'Alester has, in various speeches, and in the pages of this periodical, stated again and again, that he did not accuse Mr. Porter and others of Deism, but of so interpreting the principles of the Presbytery of Antrim as to open its pulpits to those who saw nothing Divine in Revelation.

THE UNITARIAN HERALD AND THE REV. S. BACHE.

THERE has appeared in *The Unitarian Herald* a series of articles, entitled "Free Thoughts on Religion," which bear the signature of "W," and, as it now appears, are from the pen of one of the Editors. In one of these the writer repudiates every thing that is supernatural in the life of Christ, and reproduces the arguments which were familiar to the old Deistical writers. Mr. Bache, who has from time to time borne noble testimony against the sceptical and Deistical views which have latterly spread so widely in the Unitarian Church, has written a manly and able letter in reply, from which we have pleasure in making the following extracts:—

"I fully recognise the right of your correspondent, 'W.' to regard 'the Gospels, as we possess them,' as not 'satisfactory witnesses of the miraculous,' and to reject their testimonies to the miraculous accordingly, and of course the miraculous itself along with them. But when he has done this, and has thereby rejected the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth, not only as that Messiahship was anticipated by the Jews, but also as it was claimed and explained by Jesus himself, it is surely not consistent with 'simplicity and Godly sincerity' for him to insist on his right to retain a name which distinctly implies the recognition of that Messiahship, and 'to keep open the admission to [the name *Christian*] for all who reverence' Jesus, *not* 'Christ, as a spiritual leader, and look to him for the best nutriment man can give their souls.'

"Much more straightforward and honourable is M. Rénan in entitling his well-known work 'The life of *Jesus*,' not, of *Christ*. Historically, not less than etymologically, it must be maintained that the disciples of Christ were those who recognised Jesus as the Christ, and whose claim to the designation *Christian* rested on the very ground of that recognition. While it was yet a question among his countrymen whether Jesus were the Christ or not, his disciples were called by them not *Christians* but *Nazarenes*. See the question proposed to Jesus himself and his own answer to it in John x. 24—30; and the distinction still maintained by the unbelieving Jews some twenty-five or thirty years after the crucifixion of Jesus, in Acts xxiv. 5.'

"Let 'W.,' then, call himself a *Nazarene*, and not incur the risk of introducing confusion into the minds of your readers, or of obliterating the *fundamental truth* of the Gospel that 'Jesus is the Christ'—(see John xvii. 3; 1 Corinthians iii. 11)—by claiming the term *distinctively* appropriate to those who recognise it as equally appropriate to those who deny it: thus effectually misleading all those of your readers who know little or nothing of Greek, thrusting out of their sight altogether an historical fact which Jesus himself, and, after him, his apostle Paul, cites as constituting the very basis of all distinctively *Christian* verity. 'W.' may regard the distinction as of no consequence; but he has no right on that account to annihilate it so as to secure to himself an unfair advantage in the discussion of this question over those who differ from him, by depriving them of a distinction which he must know occupied

so prominent a place in the teachings of Jesus himself and of his apostles after him. As a matter of courtesy, I grant the name *Christian* to every man who claims it, simply because it is no business of mine to inquire into his religious sentiments: but if, while making his claim to the name *Christian*, he distinctly *denies* that Jesus is *the Christ*, I feel it my duty to enter my most clear and solemn protest against a perversion of language which in any serious connection is to be strongly reprobated; and which, in connection with 'Free Thoughts on Religion' converts them into 'Loose Thoughts for Loose Thinkers,' such as can never promote, but may most injuriously retard, their growth 'in knowledge and in all judgment.'—(Philippians i. 9.)

"A conviction of what I owe to my Divine Master and to that sacred truth which he came into the world to promulgate, as also to those of my fellowmen among the working classes, whose unavoidable ignorance is thus shamefully abused by men to whom they naturally look up as their religious teachers, has constrained me to draw up these observations, and to request your insertion of them. Nothing but such underhand attempts to ignore the *miracles* of Christ, would ever have given them that prominence in my regard which the defence of them necessarily requires. I am so far from grounding religion *exclusively* upon them, that, did they stand by themselves as mere marvels, I should not think them worthy of the smallest attention: but I agree with Mr. Goldwin Smith—Professor of Modern History in the University of Oxford—that 'there may well have been a moral end for the performance of miracles at the time when Christianity was to be introduced into the world. . . . The occurrence of miracles, then, at the time when the Gospel was first published, presents nothing from which reason need in the least degree recoil.' ('Rational Religion,' pp. 101, 102.) I have further endeavoured to show in my Lectures entitled 'Miracles, the Credentials of the Christ' (p. 75, *seq.*), that the recognition of the miracles of Jesus of Nazareth is essential to the vindication of his personal character as much as of the divine mission which he claimed.

"I will only further observe, that men who, like 'W.,' extol the character of Jesus of Nazareth, and even call him the Christ while they renounce his *credentials*, are under a solemn moral obligation to set before us the detailed history of his life, as they themselves accept it. Until they do this, it is a mere *assumption* on their part that 'his special characteristic was intense spiritual religion;' and a palpable delusion to avow that they accept 'the character pourtrayed in the Gospel record of him,' while they reject the most striking and prominent details of that very portraiture itself. We know what M. Rénan's history of the 'Life of Jesus' has shown. Let 'W.' and his fellow 'free thinkers' (especially those of the *highest* culture among them) put their hands to this most important work; and no longer fritter away historical records by unwarrantable assumptions and vague generalities, and trifle so recklessly and audaciously with the reputation of One whom they profess in their hearts to revere. I make this request in all sincerity and earnestness, and not at all in the spirit of controversial provocation." * * * *

INTELLIGENCE.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN MEETING-HOUSE, HOLYWOOD.

On Sunday, September 25, a sermon was preached in this meeting-house by the Rev. Dr. Montgomery. The congregation has recently expended a considerable sum in painting and otherwise improving their place of worship, and it was arranged that on the occasion of Dr. Montgomery's preaching, a collection should be made to aid in defraying the cost of these improvements. The reverend gentleman took his text from Rom. i. 16,—"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;" and Heb. xiii. 8,—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." From these words the venerable preacher delivered, to a very large congregation, a discourse on the permanency and perfection of the Christian religion, which was characterized by all the ability and eloquence for which he is distinguished. The collection taken up after sermon, with contributions from persons of various denominations who were unable to attend, amounted to upwards of £49. M. Andrews, J. Rolleston, W. Hamilton, and J. Anderson, Esqrs., kindly acted as collectors.

OBITUARY.

DEATH OF HENRY BRUCE, ESQ.

Henry Bruce, Esq., whose sudden and unexpected death we recorded last week, was the youngest son of the Rev. W. Bruce, D.D., of Belfast, minister of the first Presbyterian congregation in that town, and head of the Kinnaird branch of the Bruce family. He was born in 1797, in Belfast, and was educated for a merchant, in which capacity, at the age of 21, he left his native country for Demerara, British Guiana, where he resided till the year 1833. His career there is thus briefly sketched by one who knew him intimately:—

"The late Henry Bruce, Esq., arrived in the colony of Demerara and Essequibo the latter end of the year 1818. His ability, firmness of character, and unassuming but dignified address and manners very soon commanded attention and respect. He early took a warm interest in the affairs of the Presbyterian church opened in George Town in the year 1819. He became eventually a member of the vestry, and treasurer, and was the first member of the congregation who urged on the minister the important duty of administering the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which he had altogether omitted during several years' ministry, under the plea that the congregation were not fitted for it. My friend carried his point, and was one of the first to approach the table; the company was indeed a small one, numbering about six, but the effect of example was truly surprising; the sacred ordinance was ever after regularly administered,

and the number of communicants constantly and steadily increased. My friend's strength of mind and sound judgment were eminently conspicuous during the exciting and most distressing scenes that occurred in the autumn of 1823, when the negro insurrection broke out on the east coast of Demerara. He acted on that occasion as sergeant in the rifle corps of militia, and the firm and dignified manner in which he opposed the officers of the company, who, under martial law, were disposed to act in an arbitrary manner, commanded universal respect.

"In the year 1826 he was elected by the College of Keziers to the responsible office of Counsellor of the Surpreme Court of Civil and Criminal Justice, of which he soon became one of the most influential and respected members. In 1831 he was elected by the votes of the inhabitants of George Town to the important situation of Financial Representative, which he held till his final departure from the Colony in July, 1833. This body of representatives consists of six members, and was formed for the especial purpose of controlling the expenditure of the Government and fixing the mode of taxation, and being joined with the Court of Policy, formed a combined Court of twelve members. For some time, however, before his election a large portion of the public expenditure had been withdrawn from the control of the combined Court, and in 1831 the College of Financial Representatives, of which my friend was vice-president, firmly refused to proceed to any details of business unless permitted to vote on every item of the expenditure After a long and arduous contest, during which repeated references were made to the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, every point was conceded, and the rights of the Colonists fully secured. For his exertions in this highly important and interesting question my friend won for himself the lasting gratitude of his fellow-citizens.

"His attention, shortly after, was directed to the unsatisfactory state of the colonial currency, then chiefly consisting of irredeemable paper, and, in a series of clever and very interesting letters, signed, 'Mercator,' he exposed the mischief arising from the system, fixing public attention permanently on this most important subject till the evil was corrected. This closed his colonial career, and he left the colony, bearing with him the highest esteem and respect of all who had the privilege of knowing him; and regretted by the lower classes, as one who always acted towards them as their true and sincere friend."

Mr. Bruce's after life was marked by the same high qualities that distinguished his early career. He married in 1835, and settled in London. As chairman of the East Anglian, and director of the Eastern Counties Railway Companies, his firm dignified conduct under most trying circumstances must be fresh in the minds of every one connected with those undertakings. To the concern of those Companies he devoted himself for the space of fifteen years, with the most self-sacrificing and devoted zeal.

In 1862 he accepted the office of Chairman of the Buenos Ayres and River Plate Bank (Limited). In the same year he was appointed one of her Majesty's Commissioners in England under the British Guiana Immigration Loan Ordinance. He had for many years been one of the directors of the Colonial Bank. He

was also Chairman of the London Branch of the Queen Insurance Company, one of the directors of the Demerara Railway, and shortly before his death had accepted the chair of the Union Bank of Ireland, of which company he had been previously vice-chairman. To all these concerns he gave the weight of his sound judgment, his high sense of honour, and untiring energy. Two days after returning from a tour of inspection in Ireland connected with the bank, he was seized with an attack of acute bronchitis, when his originally strong constitution gave way, and he sank rapidly, closing his most active, honourable, and useful career, August 31st, 1864, at the age of sixty-seven.—*London Inquirer.*

DEATH OF THE REV. JOHN JAMES.

Died, on Thursday, September 1, 1864, in his 87th year, the Rev. John James, the venerable minister of the Unitarian Congregation at Gellionen, Glamorganshire.

Mr. James was a native of the parish of Llangeler, in Carmarthenshire. His parents, though in humble circumstances, were nevertheless respected in the neighbourhood for their integrity and general Christian demeanour. The son, as was natural, imbibed the religious principles of his parents, which were Trinitarian; but his strong and candid mind soon became dissatisfied with some of the articles of his youthful creed, especially those of the Atonement and Eternal Torments. After a careful and impartial study of the Holy Scriptures, he was convinced of the futility of the arguments generally adduced in defence of these, and other Trinitarian dogmas, and became a convert to Unitarianism. Desirous of doing all he could for the dissemination of his newly-adopted faith, and counting "all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus," he evinced an ardent wish to enter the Christian ministry; but his parents, assuming their willingness to second his wishes, lacked the means to render him much assistance. However, by the generosity of a few sympathizing friends, he was enabled to enter on the studies which were to qualify him for the sacred office. He received his grammar education under the Rev. D. Davis of Castellhowell, the father of the late Rev. Timothy Davis of Evesham, whose school maintained, for a long series of years, a very high reputation, and produced many of the first scholars in the principality, both among the Dissenters and among the clergy of the establishment. Previously to the elevation of Dr. Horsley to the see of St. David's, candidates for orders were ordained from this, and other Dissenting schools, if they passed the appointed examination.

By means of great intellectual vigour and unremitting application, Mr. James's proficiency, under the instruction of Mr. Davis, was unusually great; and when he was considered well prepared for entering upon his academical course, he was advised to go to Exeter to finish his studies under Mr Kenrick and Mr. Bretland. He much endeared himself to his tutors by the character he maintained, and the improvement he made. After completing the course at Exeter, he returned to Wales, and discharged the duties of a Christian minister to the recently established Unitarian Congregations at Ystrad, Capelygroes, and Pantydefaid, in Cardiganshire. At

the commencement of Mr. James's ministerial labours at the above places, professed Unitarians were very few in number, but he lived to see the efforts of his early days crowned with an abundant harvest.

Sometime in the year 1816 he removed to Glamorganshire, and undertook the revival of the Unitarian cause at Bridgend and Bettws, which had long been in a low state, preaching at these places one Sunday in the fortnight, and doing the same at Gellionen. How long he continued to officiate thus alternately at these places we have no means of ascertaining, but he eventually resigned at Bridgend and Bettws, and took to Gellionen as his sole charge. This congregation he served with zeal and ability until about two years ago, when the ravages of an internal malady impaired a constitution otherwise strong and active, and compelled him to resign the pulpit, of which he had been so long an ornament. He was a profound Biblical scholar, and very original in some of his criticisms. His discourses were generally very argumentative, and he often used to say that the *doctrinal* and the *practical*, in his opinion, were inseparably connected. He was not only a Unitarian, but a Christian Unitarian; the "New Theology" he treated with disgust, and he was grieved to find that its teachers professed allegiance to Christ, whilst at the same time they were sapping the very foundation of Christianity. The teaching of the so-called "advanced school" he considered as nothing better than infidelity in disguise, and far more injurious to the religion of Christ than the straightforward attacks of Thomas Paine and his followers.

Eminent as he was as a minister, he was not less so as a teacher, and many of his pupils from time to time have attained to no mean rank in the learned professions, both in England and Wales.

Ere we close this brief sketch it may not be amiss to mention, that Mr. James translated Belsham's Calm Inquiry into Welsh, and also published an original work on the Atonement: the former may be had at the Depository of the South Wales Unitarian Society, but the latter is out of print. He has also left behind him some manuscripts, which he has consigned to the discretion of Mr. Thomas, Pantydefaid, and it is in contemplation to publish a selection from these, with as ample a memoir as can be compiled.

Throughout his illness he derived great satisfaction from the system of divine truth which he had publicly professed and taught, and took peculiar pleasure in dwelling on the character of Christ, the friend and brother of his disciples, and on the universal, inexhaustible love of God.

Died, on August 28th, at College Street South, Belfast, Mary Jane, daughter of Walter Oakman, Esq., Darraghmore, Glenavy.

Died, on Sept. 4th, at Dundonald, Mr. Colville Dickson.

Died, on Sept. 16th, at Bridge of Allen, Scotland, John Mitchell, Civil Engineer, only surviving son of Alexander Mitchell, Civil Engineer, Belfast.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Communications for the Editor, to be addressed by post to Rev. C. J. M'Alester, Holywood; or, to 45, Arthur Street, Belfast.

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A CHURCH UNFETTERED BY ANYTHING!

WE find in *The Inquirer* for the 8th of October, an account of the services at the induction of the Rev. Jeffery Worthington into the pastorship of the [Unitarian] Congregation of Bolton, Lancashire, for which the editor professes himself to be indebted to the "admirable report" which appeared in *The Bolton Chronicle*. It contains some things which are worthy of notice, as farther indications of the progress of what Mr. Binns denominates "modern thought," in the Lancashire and Cheshire district. A great many ministers from the neighbouring towns and villages were present; and some from distant places. The Rev. J. Hamilton Thom introduced the service, and read the lessons, (Ezekiel ch. xxxiii., and Luke xii. 35—59). The Rev. W. Gaskell welcomed the newly appointed minister; the Rev. J. Worthington replied; the Rev. J. J. Tayler delivered the charge; and the Rev. James Martineau delivered an address to the Congregation. No layman appears to have taken part in the solemnity; nor does the assent of the Congregation seem to have been asked for, or signified in any form, during the service. We are more concerned, however, with what was done on the occasion than with what was omitted; and we are especially struck with what fell from the young minister in the course of his reply to Mr. Gaskell's address of welcome. He is reported to have said:—

"MR. GASKELL AND DEAR FRIENDS,—I thank you, Sir, most sincerely for the very kind welcome you have just given me into the midst of the ministry of this province, . . . but still more do I thank you for the very kind welcome you have given me as a minister of the Church of Christ: that living Church, unfettered by creed, by tie, *or by anything;* a Church which holds as its mem-

bers the good and the true of all ages and of every age. . . . . I can only pray that when the time shall come that we, as a Congregation and minister, shall meet face to face in the unseen world, which only the spiritualized can now behold, our days here may be found not to have been in vain. I accept this office in the presence of . . . . . those reverend and highly honoured men, without whose assistance I could never have attained the cultivation which at all enables me to come among you as your minister," &c. &c.

It may be presumed that words which were uttered on an occasion so interesting to the pastor himself and to the members of his flock, were thoughtfully weighed; and, viewed in this light, Mr. Worthington's address deserves to be placed side by side with the unanimous vote of the Presbyterian and Unitarian Churches of Lancashire and Cheshire, tendering their "best thanks" to the Rev. W. Binns for his sermon on "Christianity in relation to Modern Thought,"—as one of the unmistakeable signs of the times.

Mr. Worthington commenced his speech by thanking Mr. Gaskell for the kind welcome which he had just given him "into the midst of the ministry of the province." This was becoming and proper on the occasion. Mr. Gaskell had just tendered to him a welcome into the body of ministers then assembled, and into the pastorate of the district; and his address was one which well deserved the young minister's thanks. But when Mr. Worthington goes on to thank Mr. Gaskell for welcoming him "as a minister of the Church Christ,—that living Church, unfettered by creed, by tie, *or by anything*,—a Church which holds as its members the good and the true *of all ages and of every age*,"—we must say that he puts into Mr. Gaskell's mouth words, which, (if the "admirable report" in *The Inquirer* be correct,) he did not use; and sentiments which nothing that appears in his address, *as printed*, appears to warrant; sentiments, we may add which, judging from his declarations on various public occasions, we should be very much surprised to find him expressing or approving. The sentiments conveyed in the foregoing terms we regard as Mr. Worthington's own, which he has undesignedly ascribed to Mr. Gaskell. Undesignedly it must have been; for we are quite sure there was not the remotest idea of misrepresenting him, or any one.

Mr. Worthington rejoices to be recognized "as a minister of Christ:"—and undoubtedly, to one who is desirous of promoting the kingdom of God and of Christ, the office of the ministry is "a good work;" and one which may well be entered upon with feelings of thankfulness. He rejoices that he is a minister of "a living Church." This, too, is right. The Church of Christ is indeed a living Church,—we might say, an ever-living Church,—for "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." It would, indeed, be a wretched position to be the minister of a dead Church. Mr. Worthington farther rejoices to find himself the minister of a living Church of Christ "unfettered by creed." Herein, likewise, we are in full accord with him. Creeds are authoritative interpretations of the doctrines of Christ and his apostles, employed as tests for determining the fitness of individuals for membership or office in the Church. We have specimens of them in the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds,—the Thirty-nine Articles,—the Decrees of the Synod of Dort,—and the Westminster Confession of Faith. These are creeds, and they are properly described as "fetters," that is restraints on Christian liberty. They are also usurpations on the prerogative of the Saviour, and dangerous snares to the consciences of men. With Mr. Worthington we rejoice that we are members of "a Church of Christ, unfettered by creeds." But when he speaks of "*the* Church of Christ, unfettered by creeds," we dare not adopt his words, lest we should make Christianity co-extensive with Non-Subscription, and cut off from communion with the Saviour the millions who do not see this question in the same light with ourselves, many of whom nevertheless we believe to be pure and holy in their lives and heavenly in their dispositions. We conceive that there are many of those who feel it to be their duty to submit to the imposition of human creeds (both Catholic and Protestant), who are nevertheless true members of the body of Christ, and herein we differ from Mr. Worthington, if we understand him right. At all events, we could not adopt his language. Still less could we with him rejoice in being members of a Church of Christ, "*unfettered by tie or anything.*" A Church is a society; and every society must

have something that keeps its members together, something that distinguishes them from the rest of mankind, a bond of union of some sort or other. Now, every bond of union is *a tie*. A Church without a tie is a rope of twisted sand. When Mr. Worthington speaks of "a Church of *Christ*, unfettered by a *tie or by anything*," he gives expression to a self-evident contradiction, that is to say, to simple nonsense. If a Church be a "Church of *Christ*," it has a tie; its bond of union is the common relation in which its members stand to Christ, who is, by its very designation, recognized as its lord and head. Such a Church cannot be truly described as held together by NO TIE: still less can it be described as not held together "*by anything*." We do not here meddle with the question, What is the relationship to Christ which constitutes a Church of Christ. Let Mr. Worthington take even the loosest description that has ever been given of that relationship. Let him, with Mr. J. J. Tayler, define it as consisting merely in a desire to imitate the character of Christ, without implying (if we correctly interpret that eminent person) belief in Christ or in any one else. Still, the Church which is founded upon and characterized by this desire to imitate the Saviour is bound together by *a tie*, by *something*. And if a "tie," if "anything" that constitutes a qualification for membership is a "fetter," (which, we need scarcely say, we do not admit,)—no Church of Christ is unfettered. To prevent misconception, we beg to state that in our opinion the relation between a Church and Christ, which constitutes the former a Church of Christ, embraces much more than a mere desire to imitate his character. According to our view it involves belief in him, acknowledgment of the claims which he asserted, and obedience to the laws which he promulgated, as well as love, gratitude, and admiration. We look upon it as an absurdity to speak of a Church of Christ which has no faith in him from whom it takes its name. But it is sufficient for our present purpose to point out that if a Church be a *Church of Christ*, in any sense that has ever been given to the words, or that we can conceive, it must have some bond of union between its members; some criterion that distinguishes them from the rest of mankind; some *test*, if men choose

to call it so; and therefore cannot be truly described as "unfettered by creed, or tie, *or anything*." It is bound together and kept together by *something*, whatever may be the nature of that something; and Mr. Worthington's assertion that it is not, seems to us a palpable contradiction in terms, and therefore a self-destructive proposition —a proposition which no man who thinks upon the meaning of the words ever did or ever can adopt. A Church that is unrestrained, "*unfettered*," if the term be preferred, "*by tie or by anything*," is no Church of *Christ*.

And that such is really the nature of the Church into which Mr. Worthington conceives himself to have been (*though he was not*) welcomed by Mr. Gaskell, is evident from the conclusion of the sentence on which we are commenting. He considers himself to have been welcomed into a Church "which holds, *as its members*, the good and the true *of all ages, and of every age*." What may be the distinction between the good and the true "*of all ages*" and "*of every age*," we do not exactly perceive: but the general sense is plain enough; and we feel certain we do not misrepresent Mr. Worthington when we say that he is grateful for being recognised as the minister of a Church which embraces in its membership all good and true men, from the origin of our race till the end of it,—if it is to have any end;—if not, for ever. It is plain that such a Church cannot be held together by any tie of agreement *in opinion*. There have been wise and good men of every form of belief, not only in every sect and Church of Christians, but in those denominations which lie beyond the pale of Christianity,—Jews, Mahometans, and Idolaters; Deists, Atheists, and Pantheists. Cato the censor was a good and true man, though an idolater; Epicurus and Spinoza were good and true men, though Atheists; David Hume was a good and true man, though his scepticism went farther than even the doubt or denial of the existence of a God. We could name a lady of varied and high talents,—one of the most remarkable women of the present age,—*and one of the best*,—who is of opinion that "we know and can know nothing beyond *law*;" that is to say, we neither know nor can know a Deity. All these are members of Mr. Worthington's Church: but no thoughtful person could call them mem-

bers of the Church of Christ, except by way of a joke; and jesting upon such a point is not proper.

But be this as it may, we have it now, on the authority of the pastor of Bolton in Lancashire, that he is minister of a Church which is "unfettered by tie, or by anything else;" and which includes among its members "the good and the true of all ages and of every age:" (of course men of all opinions and of all religions; Jews, Mahometans, Heathens; Atheists and Idolators; dancing Dervishes and filthy Fakeers;) and that he considers this to be "the living Church of Christ!" Is it possible for the force of our new-fangled liberalism to go farther in the way of nonsense and absurdity? Is it not melancholy to find a large assemblage of professing Christians and Christian ministers sitting silent and seemingly acquiescent, while such statements were put forward in their name? We have already intimated our belief that some of those who were present were very far from concurring in the views of the foundation of the Church of Christ expressed by this young man. Several of them had an opportunity of delivering their sentiments at an entertainment which took place after the religious service of the day: *but not one ventured to utter a syllable of dissent!* It seems to us probable that they were afraid of being decried as illiberal, bigoted, exclusive, &c., &c., &c., if they had spoken a word in vindication of their own character, in explanation of their own sentiments, in illustration of their own religious position. That they would have been so decried, had they done so, is beyond all reasonable doubt. For such is the state of the Unitarian denomination in England at present, that freedom of speech is only allowed on one side of the question. Even when a voice is raised on the side of the Christianity of our younger days, it is almost always in a tone of apology. The person who utters it knows what is coming; and generally speaks in a way that implies his apprehension, if he does not actually deprecate the censure that awaits him.

This whole business recalls to our minds some transactions nearer home. The Presbytery of Antrim, nearly two years ago, introduced the practice of ordaining and installing ministers in congregations, "No questions

asked" :—thus adopting the principle which is enunciated in the first portion of Mr. Worthington's declaration,—constituting itself a Church "unfettered by creed, tie, or anything:" and by necessary implication involving the latter portion of his statement, recognizing as members of the Church "the good and true of all ages and of every age." And one of its elders only spoke out what was the reasonable inference from adopting such a basis, when he said to the late Mr. Scott of Girvan, and others, "Our desire was to build up a Church which should not be exclusively Christian in any sense; which would admit Christians, Deists, Pantheists, Hindoos, and Mahometans. Atheists would not be excluded; and even if a minister became an Atheist he should not be required to resign." But circumstances which are well understood on this side of the water, rendered the *express* enunciation of this principle awkward and inconvenient:—and accordingly, as soon as Mr. Scott was removed by death, the imputation of these words to the worthy elder was exclaimed against, both by himself and the Moderator of his Presbytery, as a calumny.* A new basis of union was then devised; *a test*, as we take leave to call it; which is stated by the Rev. John Porter in one of his three celebrated orations at Ballyclare, to be contained in one question,—"*Do you consider the Scriptures as the only rule and guide of faith?*" But our friends in England, (for we, at least, are sincerely their friends, though we tell them occasionally some unpleasant truths,) not having the same motives for withdrawing from the position first assumed, and being incapable of abandoning any position till they felt convinced it was wrong,—have adhered to it generally with consistent firmness. And with some exceptions, (those of Mr. Bache, Mr. Green, and Mr. Aspland, occur to our memory) they are striving (or allow it to be said in their presence and on their behalf, but without contradiction or dispute, that they are striving) to build up a Church which shall embrace among its members "the good and the true of all ages and of every age,"—a Church, "unfettered by creed, by tie, or anything;" unfettered by allegiance to Christ; unfettered, if words have any meaning, even by reverence

* It was perfectly true, notwithstanding: see *Christian Unitarian*, Vol. ii., pp. 59, 3.9, &c., 378, &c.

for his holiness, his benevolence, and truth. Our brethren of the Presbytery of Antrim had better look to their position. They are in danger of being left behind in the rapid race of "modern thought." If they wish to retain the praise and glory of being "the only hope of the friends of liberal Christianity in Ireland," they must retrace their steps, abandon their lately-adopted test—*Do you consider the Scriptures to be the only rule and guide of faith?* and go back to their original position—"*No questions asked!*" They must reassert what the Rev. S. C. Nelson declared in his letter to the *Christian Register*, that their "bond of union is free inquiry," simply; and with the Rev. John Porter in his speech at Moneyrea, that "absolute religious liberty is the principle of the Presbytery of Antrim." These principles are wide enough to cover anything. They will cover the Christians, Deists, Pantheists, Hindoos, Mahometans, and Atheists, spoken of by the Elder; in fact they will cover the Elder himself, along with Mr. Worthington's "good and true men of all ages and of every age." Who would wish to go farther? X.

LEAVES FROM A MISSIONARY'S DIARY.—No. I.

It is some, indeed many, years since I took on myself the engagements of a minister at large. The work was, at that time, comparatively new and untried. Tuckerman had visited this country, and by his single-mindedness, his intense devotion to the cause of the poor, his affectionate exhortations, and the beautiful consistency of his character, had won many hearts to his views, and to the necessity of a movement being made in the Unitarian body for the purpose of raising the fallen, the outcast, the despised, to the freedom that is in Christ; to an equality of Gospel privilege with those who were more favoured from position, so that the great gulf which then—would it could be said it is not still so—separated the rich from the poor, class from class, man from man, might be bridged over, if it could not be entirely filled up, so that one might pass over from the other, and thus make all members of one another. London, Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham, with similar large towns,

heard and obeyed the call. Amidst a large manufacturing population of singular skill and energy, but where there was more than an average amount of physical want and spiritual destitution, I commenced my career as a Domestic Missionary. The name was quite designatory of the office; whilst I very speedily found that the fields were quite white unto the harvest, only the labourers were few. In fact, at first I was the sole worker in the tract that had been alloted me, taking into account the peculiarities of the employment to which I had dedicated myself. The whole was new to me; it was new to the kind and zealous friends who had honoured me with their confidence. But though sometimes faint, we were persevering; though the burden was at times heavy, and the ways were rough, and the sun beat hot on the head, we felt that a great object was before us, and that those alone who persevered to the end could be crowned. Humbly, we considered that the love of Christ must have a constraining influence on our hearts or we could not be successful in reaching the hearts of others; that we must go among men in the spirit of the Master; must try to feel as he felt, aim to labour as he laboured, and preach deliverance to the captive in his temper, or nothing would be effected. We were mortal, and we may have sometimes erred, but this I can gladly, cheerfully, testify, that the friends of the Mission were enlightened, earnest, sincere, that they had given themselves to the work, and that they spared no exertions to promote the great end they had in view. A few of those friends remain, and advancing years have not damped their ardour, nor, I am well assured, diminished, in any degree, their affections towards the Mission; but the majority have, one by one, departed this earthly scene,—have gone, we firmly hope, to receive the reward of the just. To me their memory is very dear, it must remain fresh and green as long as my own life is prolonged. Their removal serves most forcibly to remind me that I must, and it may be soon, arise and depart as they have done, for this is not the place of our rest.

But I have remarked the work was new, and especially so to me. I was the agent of a most benevolent movement, and the pressing question was how the design could be carried out; how my various duties could be fulfilled

with faithfulness, and a fair prospect of success. There was much to be thought on, and there was much also that required prompt, almost instant, execution. The public services, of whatever kind, were among the least important of my duties; at all events, they were those which required the least relative consideration. The visiting, the going from house to house, from family to family, from one person to another, was to me the puzzle, the exceeding perplexity. I had preached a kind of inaugural discourse to the friends of the Mission, which, I had reason to believe, was appreciated; I had met the Sunday-scholars with their teachers; I had addressed a tolerable number of persons of the class I most wished to influence, in our very lowly but not inappropriate house of worship,—our "Chapel," as we fondly called it,—but the peculiar work had yet to be begun, the work for Monday and the succeeding days of the week,—the work of visiting,—and a little nervousness may well be pardoned at the thought of it, still more when actually put in execution. If my recollection serves me properly, Tuckerman experienced a misgiving at *his* entrance into this part of his labours; he tremblingly knocked at the first door, but he soon found he was on the right track. He met with a cordial welcome, and so did I on my first essay. The ice was broken, the plunge was made, the difficulty vanished. I began with a family I had noticed the previous evening as present at the service; there was unexpected distress here, the death—I believe sudden—of a child, and there was much grief. The call was well taken; it was opportune. Religion and its value, its realities, its consolations, formed the theme of our conversation; the poor mother appeared to find relief, and I had the satisfaction of finding, before my departure, serenity, if not cheerfulnes, take the place of the grief which, at my entrance, was loud and vehement. Several visits were made after this in the course of the day, and so continued from day to day, from week to week; of these my recollections are now very imperfect, but I find the general record to be, that something was done,—attempted, at all events, to be done,—though much, as yet, remains undone; that the load of human misery had been in some small degree lightened, and that great

contentment existed in the midst of sore poverty; resignation, also, where want must have been painfully felt; piety, and the consolations of our common Christianity, present in the time of affliction. I met with more than one instance where fatherless children had been taken in and provided for by those who had no certain provision for themselves; the poor were helping each other, and in a way that richer people could hardly have done for them, their lowly condition never checking the generous impulses of the heart, often, perhaps, calling these more effectually into action. Yet on the other hand, there was much I was compelled to witness that was depressing, harrowing. Gross ignorance, gross neglect of duty, social obligations ignored, family ties rudely snapped asunder. Here a man spending all his earnings in liquor, leaving his wife and children in cold, hunger, and destitution. Here a woman squandering her husband's gains in junketings, waste, or foolish personal ornament. Here children never sent to school, nor taught any difference between right and wrong, and, as a necessary consequence, becoming bold, self-willed, saucy to the parents, a pest and disgrace to the neighbourhood. A general neglect of the Lord's Day and religious ordinances. Sensualism predominant as long as the money lasted; semi-starvation till Saturday brought some more into the house, to be consumed in the same irrational way. Now here was up-hill work indeed; my days, with my feelings and my hopes, were much chequered. Bright visions of what good might be done, alternating with depression of spirits on a view of the actual state of things. Still hope, "the medicine of the soul," was uppermost,—I must do what I could; I must seek for help from above; I must not be slack nor weary in the work of the Lord. I found that in many instances the first call was considered as only a prelude to a second and succeeding ones—as a commencement, so to speak, of acquaintanceship. Some there were, as I also discovered, who wanted my visits solely for temporal aid. These were not to be absolutely discouraged. Yet it was incumbent on me to assure them that I did not seek them as a mere almoner, nor was the Mission to be made an almsgiving institution; still there were unmistakeable

indications of narrow circumstances, of sore heart-withering poverty, and from such we must not turn coldly, churlishly away. The great point, and perhaps the great difficulty, is not to cherish a disposition to rely on others rather than on the individual's own exertions. Better, far better, to be sometimes deceived, than to withhold giving from fear of being deceived.

Now, I find a very early memorandum to this effect:—"Saw an elderly man in ——, very poor and ignorant, who was once in prosperous circumstances, but who sadly misused his opportunities. The conduct of his daughter, a very decently-behaved person, is worthy of great praise. She denies herself that she may support her father and three orphan nieces. The old man—a type of the earthly, in opposition to the spiritual—gradually opens his heart as I call, time after time. I have dealt with him, as I trust, faithfully, and with a desire to cheer and console as well as awaken. Talking with him one day on the parable of the Prodigal Son, I was indeed astonished, as well as grieved, to find that he had never heard of it. True, he cannot read; but who, in this land of churches and Bibles, ought to be ignorant of this most touching of all stories? I read to him the fifteenth chapter of Luke's Gospel and it appeared to deeply affect him."

The Domestic visit not unfrequently does good indirectly, as it may be termed. You go to some poor afflicted creature, bed-ridden perhaps, for the purpose of strengthening and consoling him, and you find some one else in the room to whom your ministrations are not especially directed, but who listens to what is said or read to the sufferer, and with an eagerness greater, it may be, than that of the patient himself. The word is in season, and it becomes the savour of life unto life; or probably what "the minister" has said is reported to an inmate of the dwelling, one with whom the minister has had no opportunity of intercourse; so, of a man who had been a hard drinker, he had been told of my calls on a sick person, and the remarks I had made. These appear to have impressed him, and he gave up his drinking propensities and became an attendant on public worship. So many years have elapsed since this took place, that I have now no recollection how this newly acquired habit was re-

tained by him. He might have relapsed, or he may have died long since; but a partial awakening was better than a continuous slumber; it might also have been the turning point in his career.

Winter is always a trying time for the minister at large, as he knows it is one of severe privation for the poor, in whom he is so much interested. Many have been the cold winters which have found me in the work of Domestic visiting. The deep snow on the ground, or the streets glazed with ice; the bitter freezing wind in the face, which speedily finds out every hole in the garment, pierces through the thin and threadbare coverings, and benumbs the poor naked exposed hands and feet. And it must be remembered that it is not the miserably abject poor that, as a rule, suffer the most at such a time. Somehow they contrive to exist through the whole, and are apparently not so much the worse for it at its close. But it is those who make no display of their poverty, who have a decent pride in themselves, and who hide much under a becoming exterior, that suffer so greatly, frequently unknown, and therefore unregarded. In a very severe winter, when public benevolence was much excited, and large subscriptions were made for the relief of pressing distress, a visiting agent of the Orthodox party, whom I casually met, asked me which I considered the worst cases in the neighbourhood—the worst he meant physically. I replied, "Usually those where the least display of poverty is made; in the front houses of the street more than in the back." He remarked that his own experience had led him to the same conclusion.

In my next, I hope to illustrate the operations of the visiting department of a mission by a few more examples, in the meanwhile commending the institution itself to the sympathy and cordial support of all who have the means of promoting its prosperity. B.

CONGREGATIONAL MEMOIRS.

No. II.—LARNE AND KILWAUGHTER—(*Continued from p.* 300.)

VIII.—James Crawford Ledlie, D.D., eighth minister, from 1808 to 1832.

Between the resignation of Mr. Worrall and the appointment of his successor, there was an interval of one year, during which time the Larne Congregation was supplied with preaching and other Christian ordinances by the joint services of the Presbytery of Antrim and the neighbouring Presbytery of Templepatrick, who on this occasion, as indeed on all similar occasions at this period, worked together in the most cordial and friendly manner. At the same time, also, a special subscription was entered into by the more influential members of the Congregation, in order to discharge the arrears of stipend which were due to Mr. Worrall on his removal to Clonmel, and thus comply with an excellent rule in the Presbyterian Church, which requires this to be done before the settlement of a new minister.

Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Ledlie was a native of Coagh, on the borders of the Counties of Derry and Tyrone, where he was born in the year 1785. He was educated, as were all the Irish Presbyterian ministers of that day, at Glasgow College, where he distinguished himself very much by his abilities and application to his studies. At the close of each session he returned home laden with honours; and in the year 1828, these honours were appropriately crowned by the degree of Doctor of Divinity, which was then conferred upon him in the most complimentary manner by his Alma Mater. Mr. Ledlie was a licentiate of the Presbytery of Tyrone, but his first ministerial settlement was at Donegore, in this County, where he was ordained by the Presbytery of Templepatrick, in April, 1806, being then only twenty years of age, which was also exactly my own age when I was ordained his successor in Larne. Mr. Ledlie's ministry in Donegore was very short, continuing only for two years;* but it was long enough to allow his people to appreciate his merits, and make them very much regret his leaving them to go to Larne. Their feelings, on this occasion, they expressed in rather a singular manner, by posting up on

* He was succeeded in Donegore by Mr. (now Dr.) Cooke; who again, on his removal to Killyleagh, was succeeded by the late Dr. Reid of Carrickfergus—the Historian of the Irish Presbyterian Church; a rather remarkable trio of Doctors of Divinity to have been successively ministers in one country Congregation. The taste of Donegore, in the choice of ministers, was always indisputable.

the Larne Market-house a notice for the recovery of their lost minister, headed, "Stolen or Strayed, the Minister of Donegore, supposed to have gone towards Larne." This raid committed by Larne upon Donegore, is thus recorded in the Minutes of the Templepatrick Presbytery, with which body the latter Congregation was connected :—

"At a meeting of the Committee of the Templepatrick Presbytery, held at Larne, May 2, 1808, there appeared Messrs. Robert Black and John Barklie, Commissioners from the Old Presbyterian Congregation of Larne, with an unanimous call for the Rev. Mr. Ledlie, minister of Donegore, to become their stated pastor, and praying that he may be appointed their constant supplier till next meeting of Templepatrick Presbytery"—which was granted, and at the following meeting of Templepatrick Presbytery, held May 10, 1808, "Mr. Ledlie announced his acceptance of the call of the Old Congregation of Larne; gave in his demission of the Congregation of Donegore, and prayed for credentials, which were ordered."

In our Session Book, Mr. Ledlie's installation in Larne is thus recorded :—

"June 23, 1808.—Rev. James Crawford Ledlie was this day installed as minister of the Old Dissenting Congregation of Larne, by Rev. William Bryson, and it was agreed he should have as stipend whatever the house would produce, to commence from the first of May last, at which time he commenced his pastoral charge.

"James Rea, *Session Clerk.*"*

* Since writing the above I have been favoured by my brother, Mr. Scott Porter, of Belfast, with an extract from the Minutes of the Presbytery of Antrim, giving the following additional particulars respecting Mr. Ledlie's settlement in Larne :—At a meeting of the Presbytery, held in the Library, Belfast, on August 9, 1808, present, Messrs. J. C. Wightman (Moderator), Futt Marshall, Dr. Bruce, W. H. Drummond, J. Osborne, and J. C Ledlie; the Moderator reported that at a meeting of Committee of Presbytery, held May 17, 1808, Rev. J. C. Ledlie presented his credentials from the Presbytery of Templepatrick, signified his acceptance of the call from Larne, which had been signed in presence of Mr. Osborne, and transmitted by him to Templepatrick Presbytery, apologized for the absence of a Commissioner, and communicated the wish of the Congregation of Larne, that an installation should be held there as soon as convenient. Thursday, June 23, was accordingly appointed for that purpose, Rev. William Bryson to instal, Rev James Neilson to preach. The Moderator further reported that the following gentlemen, viz., Messrs. Bryson, Marshall, Drummond, Osborne, and Wightman, met on the 23rd of June, and installed Rev. J. C. Ledlie in the First Presbyterian Congregation of Larne. The Congregation having been asked what support they intended to give Mr. Ledlie, promised whatever the house would bring, without any deductions.

On the same page with the foregoing appears the following list of "names of the Committee chosen by the Congregation, on the first Sunday of January, 1809." This list I here give, and trust that the general reader will excuse its insertion, on account of its local interest. The persons named in it are now all dead, viz. :—

"LARNE.—Messrs. Malcolm M'Neill, John Barklie, Robert Black, David Moore, Jun., Doctor Ferres, Alex. Holmes, Will. Robinson, Will. Glasgow, Will. Moore, Campbell Wilson.

"RALOO.—Messrs. John Drummond, James Lyle, John Girvan, Matthew Lyle.

"KILWAUGHTER.—Messrs. John Sinclaire, Thomas Macaulay, Samuel Boyd, Will. Nelson (Rory's Glen), James M'Dowell, Robert Thompson, John Rea.

"CRAGGY (Ballycraigy).—Mr. Robert Peden."

In this same year, 1809—

"It was unanimously determined that the roof of the Meeting-house should be repaired, and that an iron gate should be bought and put up in the opening to the yard; to defray the expense of which things, and some others of less moment which were deemed essentially necessary, it was resolved that the several members of the Congregation should be assessed in the exact proportion of stipend each pays. And should any member of the Congregation object to the repairs that are thus intended to be made, or to the mode of assessment proposed, such person or persons will be pleased to come to the vestry-room and state his or their objection, this day, otherwise the repairs will immediately be made, and the money levied accordingly. *Note.*—The above was twice read from the Clerk's seat, in full Congregation, and no objection was made on either of the Sundays on which it was read, either in public or to the Committee.—(Signed,) T. J. STAFFORD, *Sess. Clerk.*"

Accordingly the repairs were executed, and to provide for the payment thereof, the Collector of the Congregation was ordered to demand from each seatholder at the rate of half-a-year's additional or extra stipend.

In 1815, or 1816, our Congregation received a considerable accession to its numbers and influence from a singular cause. At this time, the other Presbyterian Congregation in Larne was greatly distracted by contentions as to the choice of a minister to succeed Rev. Robert Thompson who was then recently deceased. The majority eventually chose a Mr. Cochrane, upon which the minority, who had favoured Rev. Samuel Eccles (a native of Larne, and subsequently minister of Armagh), left the Congregation, and on a certain Sunday marched

in a body to "the upper house," as our meeting-house is popularly called, on account of its elevated situation. Here it was found necessary to build, for their special accommodation, an additional gallery, which, by most people, was cruelly called "the Cochrane Gallery," in honour of the gentleman from whose ministry its first occupants ran away. By others (I am bound to add) it was called "the run-away gallery;" but whatever may have been its proper designation, that gallery then accommodated persons whose descendants are, at this day, amongst the most useful and the most valued members of my Congregation.

After the last named year (1816) nothing appears to have occurred in the Congregation which was thought worthy of record, until we come to May 26, 1822, at which latter date we have another list of members of Committee, who were chosen on that day. This list, for the reason stated in the previous case, I now insert. Opposite to the name of each member as he departed this life, our late worthy Secretary, Mr. Miles Atkinson, had written the simple word "dead." Opposite to his own name,—for he was the last survivor,—it has lately been my melancholy duty to inscribe the same sad record.

"Committee Chosen, *May* 26, 1822.—Messrs. John Barklie, Treasurer; George Whitla, Matthew Lyle, Malcolm M'Neill, William Simpson, John Keith, James Carley, Henry Currin, James Lyle, Will. Nelson, Samuel Boyd, James M'Dowell, James Robinson, Robert White, David Ferguson, Dr. Ferris, Miles Atkinson, Secretary.

At a meeting of the Committee thus chosen, held on the day of their appointment, "Dr. Samuel Ferres in the chair, it was resolved to advertise for a new clerk, and that Mr. Stafford should be continued until a clerk was got, and it was agreed that Mr. Stafford should be allowed ten pounds sterling, which would include one year's salary, and compensation for teaching the boys, to be paid at the rate of 25s. per quarter." This, I believe, is the first trace that we have of a choir in connexion with our Congregation.

Not long after their election, and towards the close of 1822, the Committee were involved in an unpleasant correspondence, which at one time seemed likely to end in

a lawsuit, with one of their own body, relative to encroachments which he had made on their Congregational property. The Committee stood firm, and caused the building, which had been unwarrantably erected on their Meeting-house wall, to be removed, thus furnishing to their successors an example of quiet but determined maintenance of their Congregational rights, which, I hope, these successors, so long as our Congregation continues, will not be slow to imitate if a similar case should again occur.

In 1826, the Presbytery of Antrim held a visitation meeting in Larne, but no notice of it appears in our Congregational Books, and as I have no access to the Presbyterial records for that period, I can say nothing about it, except that the entertainment given on the occasion by the Congregation to the Presbytery, is traditionally stated to have been worthy of Larne's long established reputatation for hospitality. I may add, that the Congregational Register of Marriages and Baptisms, as kept and preserved by Dr. Ledlie, begins with this year. In the following year, 1827, "bad debts," to the amount of nearly fifty pounds, are stated to have been due by the Congregation to their minister, which he consented to cancel on the condition that in future the stipend should be paid in British currency in place of Irish, as heretofore. What, however, is more important, is that about this time Dr. Ledlie delivered a course of most useful and interesting lectures, in which he gave an admirable historical summary of the various doctrines and parties in the Christian Church. These lectures were intended to prepare his flock for the storm which their watchful shepherd saw approaching, and most completely did they accomplish that prudent purpose. When the clouds burst, Larne and Kilwaughter were prepared. The delivery of these lectures occupied a considerable time, and, from the beginning to the close, they were attended by crowds of auditors, some of whom came regularly from a great distance to hear them.

In April, 1828, the Committee of the Congregation agreed to advertise for estimates for the re-building of their Meeting-house, according to a plan which had been approved of. This they ought to have done much sooner. From a feeling of exaggerated respect for the old walls,

they had for many years previously been spending on the repairing of their old Meeting-house as much money as would have built a handsome new one. At length it became evident that the old walls could be kept up no longer, and therefore, after a very considerable outlay in a series of vain endeavours to stave off the evil day, they were at last obliged to throw down the house on which so much money had been wasted, and to rebuild it from the foundation. The ill-advised conduct of our congregation in this matter ought to serve as a warning to any other worshipping society which may happen to be similarly situated with respect to an old Meeting-house. Every such building is like a daughter of the horse-leech. Its continual cry is, Give, give. It is never satisfied. It never says it is enough.

On the 4th May, 1828, the Committee accepted the proposal of William Agnew, stone mason, Kilwaughter, to build the new Meeting-house for £470. On the 25th of the same month, orders were issued to the contractor to take down the old Meeting-house, and leave was given to any of the Congregation who wished to remove the old seats on which they and their fathers had sat so long, to do so. This many of them did, and the children of some of them retain the venerable relics to this day. A Building Committee, consisting of Rev. Dr. Ledlie, and Messrs. George Whitla, A. R. Burke, D. Ferguson, James Carley, John Barklie, Peter M'Garel, and R. White, was appointed to superintend the work, which was not completed until November, 1829.*

In the meantime, the Committee instructed Dr. Ledlie to apply to the Incumbent of Larne, for liberty to preach in the Parish Church while their Meeting-house was being rebuilt. With this request that gentleman expressed his regret that it was not in his power to comply, alleging that, according to the canons of his Church, he could not allow any divine service to be performed in the Parish Church, other than that which was prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer. In this interpretation of the canons of his Church, I am sure that my excellent friend and former neighbour was quite correct. But I

* I must add, however, that even so late as 1834, when I came into possession, the Meeting-house was still in a very unfinished state.

am also sure that he must indeed have regretted the necessity which, in this instance, obliged him to refuse to Dr. Ledlie and his Congregation the accommodation which not many years before, when the Parish Church was undergoing repairs, he himself had asked and obtained from them. Whether persons should solicit and accept from others a compliment which they know they cannot return, is a question which casuists in etiquette must be permitted to determine. However, our Congregation were not left houseless in consequence of the ill-success of the foregoing application. The Rev. Joseph Shaw, minister of the other Presbyterian Congregation in Larne, on being applied to for the use of his Meeting-house, at once granted it in the most cordial manner; and this piece of neighbourly good fellowship is recorded by our late kind-hearted Secretary, Mr. Atkinson, in the following characteristic entry, which I cannot deny myself the pleasure of quoting:—

"To all whom it may concern. Be it remembered that the First Presbyterian Congregation of Larne occupied the Meeting-house of the 2nd Congregation, from the first Sunday of June, 1828, to the last Sunday in October, 1829, during the time their Meeting-house was a re-building. This is as it should be."

It will be seen that our Congregation soon had an opportunity of expressing their gratitude in more than words. The actual cost of our present Meeting-house seems to have been about £800, although the original estimate was for little more than half that sum. Dr. Ledlie's subscription book records contributions to the amount of £650 (of which rather more than one-sixth was given by members of the Agnew family), and the balance must have been made up from other sources, including particularly the proceeds of the sermon at the opening of the new house, which was preached by Rev. H. (now Dr.) Montgomery, on the 1st November, 1829. On this occasion the following gentlemen acted as collectors, viz:—Messrs. E. J. Agnew, Patrick Agnew, James Owens (Holestone), R. W. Johnston (Glynn), Archibald Barklie, Solomon Darcus, J. M. Casement, J. Agnew Farrell, Thomas Davison, John Barklie, John M'Cullough, Campbell Wilson, W. W. M'Neill, Dr. Thomas Kirkpatrick, William Simpson, and Miles Atkinson. The new

Meeting-house, being a square building, and of an entirely different shape from the old house, which was cruciform, some little difficulty was for a time experienced in settling the Congregation in their new seats, so as to avoid giving offence to that attachment to old places for which they have been long and most creditably distinguished. But at length the matter was accomplished in such a way as gave general satisfaction, and on the 18th April, 1830, the Committee were enabled publicly to "express their satisfaction at observing the good temper and accomodating disposition which had been so generally evinced by the people, and to congratulate them on the prosperous state of their affairs."

In September, 1831, the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster assembled in Larne, for the purpose of holding their second annual meeting consequent on their separation from the General Synod of Ulster. At the close of the meeting, as Larne was not a Remonstrant Congregation, the Moderator of Synod returned thanks to Dr. Ledlie and his people for the use of their Meeting-house, and for their attention to the members of Synod during its sitting. On two of the days of meeting the Synod were entertained at dinner by a large number of the most respectable and influential inhabitants of Larne and its vicinity; and the evenings were spent in the interchange of sentiments of liberality and mutual kindness. (*Bible Christian*, 1831, p. 436). Towards the end of this same year, our late worthy Secretary, who was also Treasurer, records,—and not I think with entire satisfaction,—that within its space not less than three public collections had been taken up in our Meeting-house; one after a sermon by Mr. Mitchell of Newry, towards liquidating the debt still remaining on the house; the second by Dr. Ledlie, for the Larne Mendicity; and the third, also by Dr. Ledlie, for the poor of the West of Ireland. On the last occasion, upwards of £25 was collected.

On April 2, 1832, "a deputation consisting of Messrs. Snoddy, Robinson, and M'Alister, waited on the Minister, Session, and Committee of the First Presbyterian Congregation of Larne," with a letter from "the Second Presbyterian Congregation of Larne," asking for the use of our Meeting-house whilst their own was being re-

built. The request was of course immediately granted; "Dr. Ledlie and the Committee of the First Congregation expressing their gratification at having an opportunity of in some measure repaying the obligation which they owed to the Second Congregation, and therefore with pleasure granted them the use of their Meeting-house for divine service on Sundays, at two o'clock, afternoon."

In this year (1832), Dr. Ledlie resigned charge of the Congregation of Larne and Kilwaughter, and removed to Eustace Street, Dublin. Considering the strong mutual attachment which had subsisted between him and his people in Larne, many persons wondered that he should have left the place where he was respected and beloved. But he himself, in a letter addressed to the public prints at the time of the Dissenters' Chapels Bill, stated "that the support which the Congregation of Eustace Street were then enabled to offer him from their endowments, and the prospect of a maintenance for those dearest to him on earth, when he should be no more, together with the hope of finding a situation better adapted to that bodily infirmity under which he had laboured since childhood, and which he felt to be increasing with increasing years, were amongst the motives that led him to wish for a change." Dr. Ledlie preached his last sermon in Larne, as minister of the Congregation, on the 26th of August, 1832, but it was not a farewell sermon, nor did his Congregation then know anything of his contemplated departure, which took place two days afterwards. I believe his feelings would not have allowed him to take leave of them from the pulpit. In Dublin he was spared to minister to a small, but deeply attached body of people, for 20 years; and he died there rather suddenly, on the 11th of August, 1852, in the 67th year of his age. *

* Dr. Ledlie married Mary, daughter of Alexander Holmes of Larne, and this lady, by whom he had a large family, still survives him. During the latter part of his ministry in Larne, Dr. Ledlie lived in the townland of Ballyboley, where he built a large house and occupied a farm. In the memoir of the ministry of Mr. Worrall, I should have mentioned that he lived at Greenlands, within a mile of the town of Larne. I also find that I was mistaken in representing Mr. Worrall as having been tutor in the family of Mr. Turnly, of Rockport. It was in the family of the *first* Sir Robert Bateson, of Belvoir, that he acted in that capacity, and it was there that Mr. Farrell, when on a visit with his relatives, the Turnlys, who lived in the neighbourhood of Belvoir, met him.

His funeral sermon was preached by Doctor Drummond, himself a native of Larne; and that part of it which gives a correct sketch of his life and character, was afterwards published in the *Christian Reformer* for October, 1852. In the Larne pulpit, which he had occupied for 24 years, I also thought it my duty to allude to Dr. Ledlie's death; on which occasion (as I find my words quoted by Dr. Drummond at the passage above referred to) I "gratefully acknowledged, as his successor, that to his timely exertions to instruct those who waited on his ministry in the pure doctrines of Christ's holy Gospel, as distinguished from the unauthorized additions of uninspired men, I was mainly indebted for that comparative immunity from religious controversy which I had hitherto been permitted to enjoy, as well as for the unspeakable blessing of an united, a reasonably assured, and firmly attached body of people."

This testimony to the merits of my immediate predecessor, it gives me pleasure now to repeat. In these papers I have as little desire to flatter, as I have to affront, either the living or the dead; but whilst I feel that to some of my predecessors in the Larne pulpit I owe scanty thanks; whilst I cannot forget that one of them deprived his successors of a manse and valuable farm, and another of them alienated a handsome rent-charge on the Kilwaughter Estate;* in the case of Dr. Ledlie, I must always with gratitude confess, that to his seasonable labours, and to the independent position which he took and maintained with his Congregation and in the neighbourhood, I am, under Divine Providence, mainly indebted for a perfectly peaceful, and a tolerably happy ministry of more than thirty years in the Congregation of Larne and Kilwaughter.

And now, having at length completed my account of the labours of my predecessors in the Larne pulpit, I implore my people to "REMEMBER THESE *which have had the rule over them, and who have spoken to them the Word of God; whose faith I (adjure them to) follow, considering*

* When referring to this matter in a previous paper, I ought to have mentioned that the successive proprietors of the Kilwaughter Estate, since Mr. Worrall's abnegation of "the Kilwaughter Stipend," have always hitherto, in part lieu thereof, contributed a handsome sum yearly to our Congregational funds.

the end of their conversation, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever; and be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines."

(*To be continued.*)

"NOTHING BUT LEAVES."

NOTHING but leaves; the spirit grieves
Over a wasted life;
Sin committed while conscience slept,
Promises made, but never kept,
Hatred, battle, and strife;
Nothing but leaves!

Nothing but leaves; no garnered sheaves
Of life's fair ripened grain;
Words, idle words for earnest deeds;
We sow our seeds;—lo! tares and weeds,
We reap with toil and pain
Nothing but leaves!

Nothing but leaves; memory weaves
No veil to screen the past;
As we retrace our weary way
Counting each lost and misspent day,
We find sadly at last
Nothing but leaves!

And shall we meet the Master so,
Bearing our withered leaves?
The Saviour looks for perfect fruit—
We stand before Him, humbled, mute,
Waiting the word he breathes—
"Nothing but leaves!"

"SEEDTIME AND HARVEST."

To the reflecting mind how many interesting and important thoughts are suggested by these two words—"seedtime and harvest." God is represented as saying to Noah that "while the earth remaineth seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease." Of the exact date at which this record was made, how long after the creation of man, or under what kind of divine inspiration, we have no means of accurately determining, and philosophers and divines hold very conflicting opinions. But of the great antiquity of the record there is no doubt. It reaches far back into the period anterior to the Christian era, and points to a time when the nations—ancient as well as modern—that have since been prominent in history, had not even a name; and when this island and the sister kingdom were thinly peopled by savage tribes, or perhaps were possessed only by wild beasts; and down through the ages that have since elapsed, through periods of the grossest ignorance and degradation, and periods of comparative light and knowledge, in every land which man has possessed, or which the curious and daring have explored, "seedtime and harvest" have not ceased. In regular and undeviating succession the tree and the plant have put forth their leaves, flowers have bloomed, the seed has been matured, and food has been provided for man and beast. What a striking idea is thus presented to us of the greatness and goodness of God! Men have lived, and toiled, and died; nations have risen, flourished, and decayed; knowledge has prevailed for a time, and then has been overrun by barbarism and shrouded in darkness, and again emerged into a fuller and more abiding light; but God has reigned throughout all, and "seedtime and harvest" have not ceased. Men in various lands, diligently using the means of improvement that God had placed within their reach, have risen to virtue, and have lived according to their light in the service of their Creator:—men in every land, and under every form of government and of religion, have sinned against God, and have violated his plainest commandments; they have debased their own nature, and have spread misery around

them; but whatever man has been, God has been good; he has made his sun to shine on the evil and the good, his rain to descend on the just and the unjust; "seedtime and harvest" have not ceased.

But consider now how remarkably the seasons illustrate the attributes of God. Surely chance has nothing to do in changes that have so long and so uninterruptedly prevailed—changes that have brought with them results so rich and so beneficent. To produce seedtime, and to bring the various plants through the gradual stages which terminate in harvest, how many and varied the means that are employed! The earth must hold a certain position in relation to the sun, and must move through its vast orbit with the utmost precision; the clouds must temper and regulate the sun's rays as they pass through them, and must send down the dews, and distil the showers to refresh and aid the plant; the atmosphere must lend its potent aid to the humblest blade of grass, to which air is as needful as to any of us; and the mysterious agency of the soil is needed to sustain the various plants that spring from its fertile bosom. To analyse the soil, the atmosphere, the light, and the heat, has employed the utmost efforts of the chemist, and the discoveries that have been made tend to impress the mind most powerfully with the wisdom of the Creator. And yet only a little of his works and his workings has human inquiry discovered: the student of nature stands only as it were in the outer court of the vast temple of nature, and into the holy place, and the nearer presence of Jehovah, he has not reached. What is the hidden power that through sun, and air, and earth, and moisture, carries out such wonderful efforts, we vainly essay to learn. Truly "we know but in part." Consider, too, the formation of the various seeds, adapted to different climates, and suited for different purposes; the wonderful organisation of the most minute of those seeds; and the growth of the plant which it produces, and in which a hundred fold it multiplies itself; and how much there is to impress us with the boundless power, unerring wisdom, and universal goodness of him to whom we owe "seedtime and harvest." At first sight "seedtime and harvest" are a matter of interest only to the agriculturist, and many

may feel little concern in their regular and favourable recurrence; but a moment's reflection will teach us that all are deeply concerned in them, and that to them we owe not only the prosperity of commerce and the wealth of the nation, but our existence and health; and hence not only in districts chiefly agricultural, but in almost every land, the return of these seasons has been welcomed by festivals and religious services. In one of the great feasts of the Jews sentiments of thankfulness for the harvest were embodied; and the pious son of Abraham was accustomed, at the appointed season, to repair to the temple, bringing with him a basket containing two loaves made of the new meal, and present it to Jehovah as a grateful offering. The words in which the offering was made, as recorded in Deuteronomy, are striking and beautiful. "A Syrian ready to perish was my father: and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous: and the Egyptians evil-entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage: and when we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression: and the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders: and he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, a land that floweth with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first fruits of the land which thou, O Lord, hast given me." It is surely becoming that while daily our gratitude should be poured out to him to whom we owe "life and breath and all things," we should recognise at these seasons the continued bounty and care of him who has graciously ordained that "seedtime and harvest shall not cease."

While it is true that in God we live and move, and that we are dependent on him not only for the changing seasons, but for all we have and are; it is plain that to avail ourselves of God's bounteous providence we must exert ourselves, and that the fruits of the harvest will be more or less according to the amount of industry which we apply. We do not limit God's power, and therefore we believe that he might so have arranged his providence

that food and raiment might have been placed within our reach without any effort being needed on our part to procure them. But neither do we doubt the wisdom of God, and therefore we believe that he wisely ordained that we should cultivate the earth, and that diligence and toil are needed in order to the sustenance of human life. It is not always the case that the diligent husbandman has an abundant crop; enough there is in life's experience to shew us that our own efforts are not everything; but we know that a careful preparation of the soil, the removing of weeds, the selection of seeds, and the application of suitable manures, are needful to procure an abundant crop; and we thus learn the important lesson that, while our Heavenly Father has done, and is ever doing, much for us, he requires us to do something, to do much for ourselves. No where is it more strikingly true than in "seedtime and harvest" that indolence is punished and industry rewarded.

Human life, as we contemplate it in its several stages, from the cradle to the grave, presents to us a "seedtime and a harvest." Whatever tendencies there may be in the physical and the moral condition of the infant, there is no knowledge, no goodness, and no sin; and the early years of life are those in which are scattered on its heart those early seeds of knowledge, sin, and goodness, that are usually matured in the character and the life of the man. Hence we may trace to the period of childhood, in many cases, the deeds of valour, the sentiments of patriotism, the benevolent affections, and the habits of piety, on the one hand; and, on the other, the selfishness, sensuality, irreligion, and crime, that mark the after years of life. Some truthful and timely word, spoken by a loving parent into the listening ear and open heart of the child, may, under God's blessing, germinate and grow into a holy sentiment, and beautify and bless the life. Some impure thought, dropped by the profane and immoral into the soul of unsuspecting childhood, may, if not by careful training rooted out, grow and spread its roots and pollute the life. In youth, what seeds of disease, suffering, and misery are freely sown by the self-indulgence to which the young are so prone; and their after life, no matter how carefully and faithfully spent, can never

eradicate them. Let the thoughtless husbandman in the season of spring permit his fields to be overrun with various weeds; as summer opens, and he sees his neighbour's land give promise of rich fruits, he perceives his error, and desires to correct it, but in vain; the springtime has been lost, and cannot be recalled: and so, through folly in youth, injury may be done which no subsequent care and culture can entirely remove. How important that parents should anxiously and faithfully watch their children, and train them to habits of industry and virtue; and how important that children themselves should endeavour so to occupy their time in the hours of business, and the seasons of play, in their homes, among their companions, and in their silent thoughts, that their childhood may be a precious seedtime, and their manhood present a blessed harvest of goodness and usefulness.

Through the light of Revelation, "seedtime and harvest" suggest other stages in the soul's history; for it teaches us the solemn and yet gladdening truth, that there is life after death, and that "whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." The present life, in its various scenes, becomes thus a seedtime, and the future life the harvest. Carrying out the analogy which nature, so far as we observe it, presents, is it not reasonable to suppose that the life which now is shall give a complexion to the life beyond? Grant for a moment that our prevailing temper and habits in the present state of being determine our condition in the immortal life, and how much is the importance of "the life that now is" increased! To violate conscience might seem a small matter, if only thus we could gratify our desires, or add to our gains; to injure a fellow-mortal might appear a light affair, if thus we could benefit ourselves; and so many often think and act. But if these transgressions are seeds of misery that will germinate and grow, and bear bitter fruit in the spirit life, how terrible they should appear, and how carefully we should avoid them! Some—many—get rid, as they suppose, of all responsibility, by a literal interpretation of the text which says, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." This and similar passages present to us a most important and comforting truth, in teaching that through the influences of a crucified Saviour, our heart

may be renewed, and our life reformed: but still there stands out prominently in the Gospel, the great and solemn declaration, uttered by Christ, and repeated by his Apostles, that we shall answer for the deeds done in the body. Thus life is the seedtime, eternity the harvest; and surely it concerns each of us to consider what this harvest shall be. Our seedtime is now; let us spend it diligently and faithfully, working as we have means and opportunity, and trusting in the mercy of God, revealed in Christ Jesus, for the issue.

There is much truth as well as beauty in that passage from one of David's psalms,—"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." When we see any of the children of men toiling in vain, their hopes blighted, and their labours unrewarded, yet still trusting in their God, and earnestly striving to serve him;—when we see any tried with afflictions and bereavements, weighed down with suffering, and yet still clinging in faith to their Father; laying loved ones in the grave, and weeping over buried hopes and buried joys, yet looking in trust to God and cherishing submission to his will, they are, amid their sorrows and tears, sowing in faith and trust,—and they shall reap in joy when the end of their trials shall have come, and they shall have reached to the rest and blessedness of their Father's home. May we reverse the psalmist's words, and say—they who sow in joy shall reap in tears;—not meaning that those whom God has blessed with health and other sources of happiness here shall reap misery in the future life; but that those who spend their years below in seeking unlawful indulgences, which ever minister momentary enjoyment, shall reap in the world beyond, tribulation and woe, and shall pass into that state where there is represented to be "weeping and wailing."

"Seedtime and harvest"—what impressive thoughts they suggest of God's unfailing care and goodness. What solemn reflections they suggest to children, to their parents, and their teachers, respecting the value of childhood as a preparation for matured life. What an appeal they make to the young to refrain from all evil indulgences which implant the seeds of pain and misery in after life. "Seedtime and harvest"—how these words solemnly weighed may awaken us to the value of the present life,

and the momentous interests that are bound up in it: life, through its stages a "seedtime," and "the harvest" the end of the world.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH *THE LONDON INQUIRER.*

UNDER this heading we gave, in our last number, several letters which had appeared in *The Inquirer*, bearing on our Irish controversy. In the last of these letters the Rev. C. J. M'Alester had denied the truth of a charge brought against him by the Rev. John Porter, of having accused him and the other members of the Presbytery of Antrim of Deism and Infidelity,—and he had called on Mr. Porter either to prove or retract this accusation. After waiting three weeks, and receiving no reply to this demand, Mr. M'Alester addressed the following letter to *The Inquirer*:—

"*To the Editor of The Inquirer.*

"SIR,—It will be in your recollection that, in a letter published in *The Inquirer* of September 10, the Rev. John Porter stated that I had 'often and unmercifully accused the ministers of this body [the Presbytery of Antrim] of Deism and Infidelity;' and that in my reply to that letter, which you published on September 24, I declared that I was 'not conscious of having even once done so, either in public or in private,' and called on him 'to substantiate his statement, or to withdraw it.' Several weeks have since elapsed, and to this reasonable demand on my part no response has been given. The obvious inference is that the accusation is unfounded, and that it is only the figment of an excited imagination, or the invention of some unscrupulous partisan to whom Mr. Porter had unwisely lent his ear. But although silence in such a case is significant enough, it would have been more becoming and honourable on the part of Mr. Porter to have confessed his error, and frankly withdrawn his accusation.

"And now, Mr. Editor, a word to yourself. You have had the facts mentioned in my letter of August 22, and the corroborating evidence generously afforded by your friend Mr. Porter, to satisfy you that you were under an erroneous impression when you accused me of attempting to impose a 'New Unitarian Creed;' and I think it was not too much to expect that you would candidly have acknowledged your error. Such an admission would have been just and honest, and might have helped to show that in the enlarged liberty you have recently advocated, you did not mean to include the liberty of bearing false witness against your neighbour.—I am, yours, &c. "C. J. M'ALESTER.

"HOLYWOOD, COUNTY DOWN, *Oct.* 18, 1864."

We perceive by *The Inquirer* of October 22, that the Editor declines to insert the foregoing letter, on the alleged ground that it would "re-open the Irish Controversy"—forgetting that he himself

re-opened it by his intemperate and unjust attack on Mr. M'Alester, and not considering that the letter which he refuses to publish forms, under the circumstances, a necessary conclusion. It is quite possible that the Editor of *The Inquirer* has acted prudently in the course he has taken; at all events we must commend his consistency, for his uniform policy has been to keep back, as far as he could, whatever might seem to militate against his favourite party.

MISSION TO THE POOR.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE CHRISTIAN UNITARIAN."

DEAR SIR,—I avail myself of your friendly medium to respectfully, yet most earnestly, solicit the friends of the Domestic Mission for cast-off clothing of any and of every kind. My present stock is very low. I cannot minister to a tenth of the wants that continually press on me. Many and many are the bare feet I could like to cover. Many a back would be the warmer for a thick overcoat. The blessing of many who are ready to perish with cold would come on the generous donors.

Parcels for benevolent uses may, at all times, be left to my care at the Mission premises, Stanhope Street.—Faithfully yours,

THOMAS BOWRING.

MISSION HOUSE, *October*, 1864.

INTELLIGENCE.

ORDINATION AT BOLTON, LANCASHIRE.

ON Wednesday, October 5, the induction of the Rev. Jeffery Worthington, as minister of the Unitarian Congregation of Bolton, took place. The Church was filled to overflowing. The Rev. J. H. Thom, of Liverpool, introduced the proceedings by suitable religious services, after which the Rev. W. Gaskell, of Manchester, welcomed the newly-appointed minister. He referred to the earlier life of Mr. Worthington, and the careful preparation he had made for the solemn work into which he was now entering, and dwelt on the principles of freedom which distinguished the association of ministers in the district, describing them as a band of brothers recognising no lordship whatever among them. "I welcome you," he added, "to what I believe is the nearest approach to a Free Christian Church in this land. You have been asked to sign no creed, you have pledged yourself to no particular system of belief. The people to whom you are to minister in holy things have chosen you in the confidence that you love the truth, and will do your best to lead them to it; and they do not so mock

their own work as to say, 'This is the only way in which we will let you lead us.'" After some further remarks on the importance of the ministerial work, Mr. Gaskell gave to the newly-elected minister the right hand of Christian fellowship.

Mr. Worthington, in reply, said:—I thank you sir, most sincerely for the very kind welcome you have just given me into the midst of the ministry of this province—a class of men for whom, as a resident among them during my life, I have held the greatest and the deepest respect, and I esteem it one of the highest privileges that could possibly be afforded me to come amongst them and be recognised as one of them this day. But still more do I thank you for the very kind welcome you have given me as a minister of the Church of Christ—that living Church unfettered by creed, by tie, or by anything—a Church which holds as its members, the good and the true of all ages and of every age; and though I assert or believe in no priesthood, yet I do feel that I this day enter into the assembly of a long line of men tried and proved in their own time, and that in entering into their footsteps and endeavouring to follow and trying to imitate their example, I do believe that a long and useful and a happy life may lie before me. To-day I realised the ambition of my boyhood—the darling wish formed in my mature years. To-day I delegate myself as a minister of Jesus Christ, in His service henceforth and so long as life may last; and I can only pray that as I do it hopefully, I may so do it completely, and that when the time shall come that we as a congregation and minister shall meet face to face in the unseen world, which only the spiritualised can now behold, our days here may not be found to have been vain.

The Rev. J. J. Tayler, Principal of Manchester New College, London, then delivered the charge, in the course of which he exhorted him as one means of building up the religious life of the people, to revive and retain among them a devout and intelligent observance of those two most needful and beautiful ordinances of the Christian Church—Baptism and the Lord's Supper,—saying that we lose something of the reality of our relation to Christ when we neglect them. The Rev. James Martineau delivered an address to the congregation, and the proceedings were concluded by a prayer and the benediction.

In the evening a tea meeting took place in the Temperance Hotel, at which about 500 persons were present. Robert Heywood, Esq., presided. Among the speakers on the occasion were the Revs. J. Worthington, J. H. Thom, J. Drummond, J. J. Tayler, W. Gaskell, J. Martineau, and J. Poynting.

WEST OF ENGLAND AND SOUTH WALES UNITARIAN BOOK AND TRACT SOCIETY.

The annual meeting of this Association was held in Swansea, on October 5. Service was held in the Unitarian Church, at twelve o'clock, when the Rev. R. B. Aspland, of Hackney, preached from Matt. xxiii. 8—"One is your master, even Christ." In the afternoon a cold collation was provided in the Music Hall, to which about 100 ladies and gentlemen sat down, Mr. George B.

Brock in the chair. After the usual loyal toasts, the chairman gave "Civil and Religious Liberty all the world over," which was responded to by the Rev. W. James of Bristol.

The Annual Report which, in the absence of the Secretary, was read by Mr. James, was very satisfactory: towards the conclusion it thus referred to the death of Dr. Lloyd, and of the Rev. John James, of whom we published an obituary in *The Christian Unitarian* for October:—"Amongst those of whose co-operation death has deprived the society during the past year, there are two valued members, who were well known and greatly respected in the Principality—the Rev. Dr. Lloyd, of Carmarthen, and the Rev. John James of Gellyonen. The services of the former, from his position as Principal of the College, with which his name was so long identified, were highly appreciated in England as well as Wales. His worth and excellence, his zeal and generosity, endeared him to a large circle of friends, who esteemed him very highly in his private as well as public character, and his memory will be cherished as a faithful and devoted supporter of the cause of Unitarian Christianity. The venerable pastor of Gellyonen, who has recently been borne to the grave amidst affectionate and reverential tokens of regard from those amongst whom, for more than half a century, he had laboured, was a man of gifts and attainments which entitled him to the high respect in which he was held by his contemporaries, and the eloquence and power of his pulpit talents caused him to be justly regarded as one of the ablest, as he was certainly one of the most popular, ministers of the religious communion in Wales to which he belonged. After a life earnestly spent in the Christian ministry, he has peacefully gone to his rest and reward at the advanced age of eighty-six years, his remains having been followed to the tomb by all sects and denominations."

The Rev. S. Hunter moved the adoption of the report, and the Rev. S. Bache moved the thanks of the meeting to the Treasurer, Secretary, and Committee of Management. The Rev. E. Higginson moved the cordial thanks of the meeting to the Rev. R. B. Aspland for his faithful and seasonable discourse in illustration of the relationship of Christians to Christ as disciples to their master. He said, a faithful sermon it unquestionably was, and a most seasonable one also. It was no use attempting to disguise the fact that eccentricities and strong diversities of opinion existed around them, if not amongst them, at the present time. It had been for many years past the characteristic of their denomination to have the most perfect reverence for Christianity as a revelation from God, and also to feel that entire liberty of thought was in most perfect accordance and harmony with revelation as well as with nature and providence. He quite agreed with some of the previous speakers that their characteristic love of liberty should not lead to that false liberality which would include in the distinctive and venerated name of Christianity all the religions of the universe.

Mr. Reid seconded the resolution, and the chairman, in putting the proposition to the meeting, made a few pertinent observations in reference to the very excellent sermon which Mr. Aspland had preached,—a sermon which was most strictly in accordance with those views which he had himself long entertained.

Mr. Aspland acknowledged the kindness of the meeting, and said that in preparing the sermon which had met with their approval, he had desired to speak what he thought were needful as well as true words. He was prepared to find dissent and even disapprobation from some, when he advocated the sole claim of Christ to be our religious master. It had seemed to him, and he observed it with profound regret, that there was a tendency manifested by some in the Unitarian Church to quit Christ, and seek other masters of their faith. It was from no desire to stir up strife, but solely from his love of Christian truth, that he had addressed to the Western Unitarian Society a plea that day for the right of Christ to be the Lord and Master of the Christian Church. That plea in no respect invalidated Christian freedom. He was as earnest as any man for full religious liberty. But it was a new doctrine that religious liberty meant the regarding as equally true, and of equal value, all opinions. He was prepared to defend the right of all Christian men to utter and propagate their views of truth; he was equally prepared to defend the right of unbelievers to speak out their thoughts. But it was one thing to vindicate their rights to free thought and speech; another thing to agree with them in opinion. He was sorry to observe in some quarters a disposition, under a professed love of liberty and of advanced religious thought too, to curb the full expression of religious conviction. When lately his valued friend, Mr. Bache, had given to the public, and in more ways than one, his deliberate and admirably expressed views on the subject of miracles, and had said that he could not conceive of a Christianity from which the miracles wrought by Christ were excluded—a sentiment in which he entirely agreed—he was met in some quarters by an outcry that it was cruel to make a doctrinal test, and to insist on any special belief as an essential part of Christianity. It had lately been urged upon them by one of their instructors, through the press, to abstain from all doctrinal utterances in the pulpit. This advice was, he supposed, founded on a similar sentimental profession of desire of protecting religious liberty. Let them, instead of this folly, turn to the manly practice of Dr. Priestley and the divines of his school, than whom no men ever loved religious liberty more, or more habitually followed out free inquiry. Let those of the present day imitate the freedom of their fathers in the faith. He, for one, was resolved to be as free in speaking for Christian truth, as he was prepared to allow others freedom in attacking it. He would not, through fear of a false charge of bigotry, allow himself to be gagged. The position of the Unitarian Church at the present moment was a proud one, provided that it was faithful to its calling. If, while jealously free, it was beyond suspicion conservative of Christian truth, the Unitarian Church must exercise a powerful influence on the religious history of the country. If, seeking other masters than Christ, Unitarians faltered in their course, they would be passed by and forgotten, and the glorious work of evangelical reform, which was entrusted to them, would devolve on other and more faithful men.

Mr. James proposed the following resolution:—"That this meeting desires to express its sincere regard for the memory of the late venerable Rev. John James, of Gellyonen, and its deep sense and

grateful recollection of his long, able, and faithful services in the cause of religion and philanthropy in the Principality." After several other resolutions had been passed, the proceedings terminated with a vote of thanks to the chairman.

BELFAST DOMESTIC MISSION.

It having been judged desirable by the Committee of the Domestic Mission to institute week evening readings for the winter season, the Rev. J. Scott Porter most kindly inaugurated the course on Wednesday evening, October 19, at the Mission House, by giving a well-chosen and most interesting series of pieces, illustrative of the ballad literature of England, introducing the subject by a graphic account of the state of the country whilst under the dominion of the Normans, the tyranny of the forest laws, and the consequent oppression which drove numbers to be breakers of the law. There was the age of force against force, when the outlaw was the popular hero; then that of chivalry and of devotion to the female sex; and lastly, the ballad full of pure and holy feeling, most beautifully exemplified in Mrs. Hemans' "Graves of a Household,"—which was read with a grace and pathos that went to every heart. Mr. Porter was warmly applauded, and the whole was well calculated to strengthen the celebrated remark of a great English statesman,—"Give me the making of a nation's ballads, and I care not who makes her laws."

RADEMON SUNDAY SCHOOL.

The annual fête given to the children of the Sunday School connected with the Remonstrant Congregation, Rademon, took place on Tuesday, September 27. The pupils with their teachers assembled in the school-room at an early hour, and marched in procession to the Junction Station, whence they went by rail to Ballynahinch, where cars awaited their arrival and conveyed them to the Spa. Here they were joined by some members of the Congregation, and after a short religious service, conducted by their esteemed pastor, the Rev. W. Crozier, they partook of an elegant and substantial repast. The children afterwards engaged in various games and sports. At 4 o'clock they all assembled under the shade of the trees and were addressed in affectionate terms by the Rev. J. A. Crozier of Ballymena. The party, numbering in all about 160, returned to Ballynahinch in time for the 5.45 train. The weather was most propitious, and greatly added to the enjoyment of the day.

OBITUARY.

Died, on the 27th and 30th September, respectively, at Adrian, State of Michigan, of typhus fever, Archibald, in the 29th, and John, in the 25th, year of his age, sons of Mr. Archibald M'Ervel, Gartree, Crumlin,

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PROTESTANTISM—WHAT IT IS, AND WHAT IT IS NOT.

To the word "Protestantism," different parties attach very different ideas. To some it indicates a political sect, distinguished by a spirit utterly adverse to freedom —a line of national policy which is essentially one-sided and tyrannical. To others it expresses membership with the Established Church of England and Ireland, and excludes all other Christians who are dissenters from the Church of Rome; while by some, again, the term is employed to designate the various Reformed Churches which hold what are commonly, but most unhappily, termed "evangelical" views of the Gospel. There is another sense in which very recently "Protestantism" has been employed, namely, to express the principle of "absolute free inquiry" in religious matters. We shall endeavour to shew in a few sentences what is the true meaning of the term, and what is the principle which it properly represents. Against a decree passed by a majority of votes in a diet held at Spiers, in April, 1529, to the effect, that no farther innovations in religion should be attempted, several German princes *protested*, and the word "Protestant" being thus originally employed to signify those who opposed this decree of the diet, soon came to denote all those who joined Luther in resisting the authority of the Roman Catholic Church. The ground taken by the Reformers was in substance that the Holy Scriptures contained all things necessary to salvation, and that the power assumed by the Church of Rome to interpret those Scriptures, was a usurpation over the mind and conscience of Christians, and ought to be resisted, while the traditions of the Church were without authority, and were not binding as a directory of faith.

The cause of the Reformation rapidly progressed, and in a little time had penetrated into almost every European nation. The yoke of Rome having been thrown off, and the minds of so many earnest men being left free to interpret the Scriptures for themselves, it was to be expected that a great diversity of opinion would soon appear, and accordingly we find that the Protestants divided and sub-divided into various denominations; but the great leading principle maintained in theory by all, though many times practically violated, was—*the Sufficiency of the Scriptures as a rule of faith.* Naturally allied with this fundamental principle were two others, which seem needful to supplement it, namely, *the rejection of human authority in religion*, and *the right of private judgment in interpreting the Scriptures.*

The very foundation of Protestantism is the authority of the Scriptures; and while it may with much truth be asserted that the Church of Rome maintains the authority of the Scriptures, yet it subjects them to its own interpretation, and prohibits its members from understanding them in any other sense than that which it presents, while "Protestantism" invites all to read the Scriptures and interpret them for themselves. Its appropriate symbol is "*an open Bible.*" It is obvious that Protestants, in abandoning the Church of Rome, did not abandon Christianity, or leave Divine Revelation an open question. On the contrary, they clung tenaciously to the records of the Saviour's Mission, and in their desire to raise them high, and place them above all rivals, they discarded tradition, however ancient and venerable, and swept away all human authority. To suppose any one to be a "Protestant," and yet to reject the authority of Revelation, would be an absurdity; for "the Scriptures our rule of faith," was the rock on which Protestants planted their foot, on which they reared their faith, and supported by which, they bore so noble a testimony, in their labours and their sufferings, to the cause of Christian truth.

It is true that those who had embraced so simple and rational a principle were soon led in practice to violate it; for they formed creeds under the plea of guarding God's truth, but really for the purpose of protecting their

own views of that truth; and thus they examined human authority, and made something more than the Scriptures their rule of faith; and down to the present day we have parties, nominally Protestant, placing at the portals of their Church, for the assent of those who would enter, not the open Bible, but Thirty-nine Articles, the Westminster Confession of Faith, or some other creed of human composition; and farther, presumptuously teaching that those who do not accept their human interpretations of Scripture, cannot be saved. Still "Protestantism," notwithstanding the injury which it so generally receives at the hands of its professed friends, is a grand principle, maintaining the supreme authority of Revelation, and repudiating all human interference in matters of religion.

We have said that recently an attempt has been made to attach another meaning to "Protestantism," and make it signfy *absolute free inquiry*. Now, free inquiry, unrestricted and absolute, is to be commended; and every one whom God has gifted with a rational understanding should, as far as opportunity offers, use it for the interpretation of truth of every kind,—scientific, metaphysical, and religious: nor should the results of the honest investigation of any one subject him to contempt or persecution, however widely they may differ from prevailing opinions. But if the exercise of "absolute free inquiry" should lead any to the conclusion that the Scriptures contain merely the record of human events and human teachings, such persons must necessarily abandon the name of "Protestant," for they can no longer hold "the Sufficiency of Scripture as their rule of faith." Those who draw from the Scriptures their religious views and hopes, and rest in their authority, may fairly call themselves Protestants, even though they should draw from them all the mystical doctrines of the Swedenborgian Church; but the moment a man discards the authority of Scripture, he forfeits all claim to the name of Protestant. We do not say that he thus forfeits all hope of salvation, nor do we say that he should lose the respect and esteem of his neighbours; but when he ceases to make the Scriptures his rule of faith, he is no more a Protestant than he is a Roman Catholic. Rénan we

may very justly speak of as an accomplished scholar and eloquent writer, Parker as an earnest philanthropist and a gifted orator, Holyoake as an able debater and an honest man; but neither the French nor American Deist, nor the English Secularist, could in any just sense be called a Protestant, for none of them would accept the Scriptures as his rule of faith.

A writer in the English *Truthseeker* has lately undertaken to shew that "Protestantism" and "absolute free inquiry" are identical, and that the imposition of any terms of commnnion in a Christian Church is a violation of the Protestant principle: but in order to support the views which he has espoused, he endeavours to make us believe, of course without any evidence to support his statements, that for the first three centuries the Church was without any test of faith; that the Roman Catholic clergy are bound by no definite form of assent; that Chillingworth, in "The Religion of Protestants," makes the unaided reason of man the authority of religious matters; and that in the Synod of Munster and the Presbytery of Antrim, for nearly 150 years, "absolute free inquiry" has been made "the basis of union and the common ground of fellowship." By allegations so extraordinary, the writer to whom we refer makes out a plausible case in support of the "absolute free inquiry" party, which is now so prominent, and with which Christian principle seems to have been forgotten in the battle for "absolute liberty." But it would be very easy to shew that, while there was no creed, properly so called, in the early Christian Church, none were recognised as members who did not acknowledge the divine authority of the Christian religion. So far were the disciples of that time from holding the doctrine of "absolute free inquiry," that, in maintenance of what they prized as divine truth (and it was something more than mere religious liberty), they were willing to endure privations, imprisonment, and even death. How they would have shrunk from that most recent and spurious form of Christianity, which makes it a matter of no importance whether or not even the ministers of the Gospel believe that Jesus is the Christ! The statement that the clergy of the Church of Rome are bound by no creed, while the

whole system of their religion ignores private judgment, and subjects the minds of its adherents to the dictates of "the Church," is so absurd, that we wonder how any writer, no matter how willing to impose on the credulity of liberty-worshippers, could venture to publish it. And not less glaringly incorrect is the insinuation that Chillingworth is the advocate of "absolute liberty" in the Church; for his whole work—"the Religion of Protestants a safe way to salvation"—is an argument in favour of making the Scriptures "the sole rule of faith." He never contemplated that men might reject everything authoritative in Scripture, and yet call themselves Christians. That the Synod of Munster and the Presbytery of Antrim have for 150 years made "absolute free inquiry" their basis of union, is simply untrue. Their professed principle has been "the Scriptures our rule of faith;" they have allowed and encouraged the fullest exercise of the individual judgment in their interpretation; but never, till very lately, has either of those bodies either countenanced in their own communion, or manifested sympathy with those who, in the exercise of their liberty, reject the authority of Revelation. A new form of religious thought has grown up of late in various Churches; and it is right that men should honestly investigate religious questions, and manfully speak out their strong convictions; but it is not right that, to support their views, they should caricature the Church of Rome, calumniate the Christianity of the first three centuries, and misrepresent the Protestantism of Chillingworth, and of the two sections of Non-Subscribers in Ireland, which for so many years consistently upheld the principles of truth and freedom for which Chillingworth pleaded.

The writer in the *Truthseeker*, to whose views we have referred, alleges, that "absolute free inquiry," as a bond of ecclesiastical union, is neither impracticable nor absurd; and he argues that both history and experience prove it to be perfectly practicable. Unfortunately for his argument, neither history nor experience proves anything in the matter. History is silent on the question. There never has been, in the annals of the Christian Church, any organization based on such a principle; and it is too soon for those who, a year or two ago, in-

augurated the basis of "absolute free inquiry" to boast of its success. Even those who are most forward to advocate it do so rather hesitatingly, and are quite ready to declare, when it serves their purpose, that not absolute free inquiry, but "the sufficiency of Scripture," is their bond of union. One of the organs of the "advanced" Unitarians in England has, within the last week or two, suggested, as the basis of a broad church,—*the worship of God as our Father*,—a principle which cannot claim to be either Protestant, Christian, or "absolute free inquiry." It is not Protestant, for it does not include the sufficiency of the Scriptures; it is not Christian, for it does not recognise the authority of Christ, and may be held by the Deist; and it is not "absolute free inquiry," for it goes to exclude those, and they are not few, among free inquirers, who neither believe in the Fatherhood, nor even in the existence of God. In the exercise of free inquiry different minds arrive at different and opposite conclusions, and cannot unite in ecclesiastical connexion, though for secular and philanthropic objects they may and should work together most harmoniously. Different forms of religious opinion demand separate organizations, and those only are "Protestant" who maintain the authority of Revelation, as embodied in the Holy Scriptures, and reject all human creeds and confessions.

WAS GOTT THUT, DAS IST WOHL GETHAN.

TRANSLATED BY REV. N. L. FROTHINGHAM, D.D.,

[This Hymn was written at Jena, by Samuel Rodigast, in 1675, for a sick friend, who composed the fine melody to which it is set].

WHAT God doth, it is all well done—
His will upright abiding,
Since he hath traced my course begun,
I will go on confiding.
My God is he
Who holdeth me;
I will not turn complainer
At such a wise Ordainer.

What God doth, it is all well done—
He never will deceive me;
In righteous paths he leadeth on,
And never will he leave me.
With patience still
I meet his will;
Ill days he timely closeth,
That run as he disposeth.

What God doth, it is all well done—
His care will be unfailing;
A healer, and a wondrous one,
Will not mistake my ailing.
No poisons his
For remedies.
His truth is my foundation,
His grace my whole salvation.

What God doth, it is all well done—
He is my light and being;
Mere evil he can mean me none;
I bow to his decreeing.
Through weal or woe,
Time still will show,
Which every thing revealeth,
How faithfully he dealeth.

What God doth, it is all well done—
If I must drink the chalice—
The bitter cup which I would shun—
My shrinking soul he rallies;
And, firmly placed,
My heart shall taste
That sweet peace in believing
Which softens down all grieving.

What God doth, it is all well done—
Strong shall that make and find me,
Rough days I may be forced to run,
Griefs pressing close behind me;
Yet God will be
Right fatherly.
In death his arm sustaineth;
Then be it he that reigneth.—*Monthly Religious Mag.*

LEAVES FROM A MISSIONARY'S DIARY.—No. II.

THERE are not, comparatively speaking, many persons who are aware of what materials a large town is composed, meaning thereby not the houses, nor the bricks and mortar used in the erection of these; not the outward and visible signs of a collection of habitations, but the inhabitants,—the rich, the poor, the prosperous, and the needy, the millionaire and the destitute,—still "brethren all," though some may have none to care for them whether they live or die. How many walk from day to day, from year to year, through the leading and the well-appointed thoroughfares of such a place in entire ignorance of the off-shoots, of the narrow lanes, the winding alleys, the close courts that lie on every side, but are concealed by the tall houses of the wide and well-frequented streets through which they constantly pass, and, to their imagination, make up the town. And as little do they know or do they care of the physical, the moral condition of those whose lot it is to be thrust aside into obscure corners, places where neither light nor air is freely admitted, where much that meets the sight is to the last degree unpleasant, yet where numbers are compelled to dwell, where large families are reared, and where, also, human nature may be studied to the utmost advantage; where it must be seen that, spite of numberless drawbacks, there is improvement going on; that though the flesh is continually lusting against the spirit, the spirit still, in many instances, gains the victory. And here I shall be pardoned in giving an extract from a small work of mine published some years back, and bearing on the subject. "The streets of a great city may be gay and attractive. Objects of rare beauty may meet the eye. There will be bustle, and parade, and splendid sights. But within a few yards of all this, in the confined court, the narrow wynd, there may exist the utmost wretchedness. There may be seen the pale, toil-worn mechanic breathing an impure atmosphere, drawing slow poison into his lungs; the mother, unable by labour and self-denial to eke out the day's subsistence for the family; the sick man wanting the commonest comforts, not seldom the barest necessaries, of life, or a family in rags

and misery from the husband's and father's sinful excesses, intemperance ruling it over the household; want, like an armed man, ready to crush the inmates. Knowing as we do that such things exist, that there remains a mighty mass of misery yet unremoved, scarcely yet touched, we cannot but speak, and we earnestly plead for sympathy, for help. We say, in the almost inspired words of Jeremy Taylor, 'What greater pleasure can we have than that one should bring joy to our brother, who, with his dreary eyes, looks to heaven and round about and cannot find so much rest as to lay his eyelids close together, than that thy tongue should be tuned with heavenly accents, and make the weary soul to listen for lightand ease, and then he breaks from the despairs of the grave, and the fetters and pains of sorrow. He blesses God and he blesses thee, and he feels his life returning; and God is pleased with no music from below so much as in the thanksgiving songs of relieved widows, of supported orphans, of rejoicing, and comforted, and thankful persons.'"

But to return to my selections, I find rather frequent references made to the case of an elderly woman who had all her life worked at the forge. To many persons this may appear strange; for we are accustomed to associate the labours of the forge with men, and these of the hardier kind. Yet in the *iron* districts it is by no means uncommon for women to work at this employment, unfit, as it might be considered, for them. This person made nails very dexterously, though she complained that the remuneration was small—a penny, I think, for a gross. She was rough-mannered and very ignorant, yet in her way civil, whilst she listened with interest to my remarks, and through them was induced to attend our religious services. She was particularly thankful for a Testament with large print I was enabled to give her, and I believe it was a source of great comfort to her. I am by no means of the opinion I have somewhere seen expressed, that poor, hard working persons, with little leisure for reading, ought to read no book but the Bible; still the Bible, the New Testament especially, should be the chief book recommended to them; for a faithful perusal of the Scriptures must make them wise to salvation, must make them re-

signed, cheerful, hopeful. The Bible is, pre-eminently, the people's book. Happily the ugly word, *Bibliolatry*, is not much known among those to whom our ministrations are chiefly directed. To them the "Book" is the Word of God, as it proves also to be the sword of the Spirit.

And so there are some to whom we are called who are full of doubts and distressing fears. The causes may be purely physical, from weakness of constitution, from extreme nervousness, or from long-continued and lowering disease; again, from defective early training, from mistaken views of religion, from sheer ignorance of the various dealings of our Heavenly Father with his frail children. However the feeling may arise, there is none more to be deplored. "In fear there is torment." I have always thought what an exquisite trait of character is depicted in Barnabas, so named from his being the Son of Consolation. We can imagine him, like his Master, going about healing the broken-hearted, binding up the bruised reed, pouring oil and wine into the wounds made by sin and the world on the poor ill-used wayfarer. To many such I have been called on to minister. Some at first refusing to be comforted,—some not daring to believe that any good was in store for them,—some drowned in tears,—some loud in their lamentations, and some mourning past sins and follies, hoping yet that they had not sinned beyond forgiveness. No precise rule can be laid down for guidance here. You must speak and act according to the exigencies of each case, because in each will be found something peculiar, something dissimilar from any or from all of the others. It is pleasant to be enabled, in however humble a degree, to console under such circumstances,—pleasant to leave the house with a conviction that you have aided to relieve mental suffering, generally more acute, more difficult to bear than the worst bodily pain. And here, again, the Gospel of Christ comes powerfully in aid. It is the balm that flows for every wound—that of Gilead which composes and heals,—it is the only oil of joy for mourning.

The town to which my ministrations were long confined was remarkable for a number of courts, each of these being full of houses, generally built in a square, with an open gravelled space in the centre. These courts were of

various sizes, some tolerably large, others quite pent up. But each court seemed a colony, a republic in itself, governed by no written laws, but by a rough kind of common law, yet well understood. There were certain traditionary regulations which could not be infringed with impunity. To these courts my attention was specially directed, for in them, rather than in the surrounding streets, though the streets were frequently included, were to be found those whom I most wished to see. I find it recorded of one of these courts that there were strange persons living there, but they must not be given up as hopeless. Something may be working beneath we are not permitted to see. There were old people whose habits—those of indifference—were fixed too firmly for human power to remove. There were young people to whom some good might be done, but it would require a long time to make the desired impression. There was, in nearly all, a neglect of public worship—never a favourable sign. Now we may talk as we please of the desirability of the mechanic breathing the fresh air of the country on Sundays, and we may declaim on the elevating influences of the fields and of public gardens, and even of museums and picture galleries, and then ask with a trumphant air, "Why are the poor shut out from these enjoyments on the Lord's day?" All this is very well; but we must remember that ignorant men can appreciate none of these things; nor will the operation of any one of them, or of all in combination, do the least good morally, *minus* the influence of religion. I would still say, Take your walk, but do not neglect public worship. You may engage in both; you may profit in both; but give the preference to the house of God. Spend not the day in idleness, in sauntering about without any object, in drinking and smoking, in the public-house or at home. Neglect of the Lord's day is at the bottom of very much of the evils that afflict society. I am not, in the common acceptation of the term, a Sabbatarian. I have no superstitious feelings on the obligations of a Jewish Sabbath; but I cannot think the Lord's day an ordinary day. I cannot think its general desecration would in any way contribute to our social or individual happiness.

At the period to which I refer, and long after, common lodging-houses were under no restrictions. The abuses which prevailed in them, and the manifest unfitness of numbers of these for the purposes designed, rendered it imperative on the legislature to enact regulations for them, especially as regarded the numbers to be congregated under one roof. The inmates of these places, *tramps*, as they are termed, were too shifting in their movements to expect much good could be done to them in the way of domestic visiting. Men who are here to-day, and gone to-morrow, cannot be brought under the influences so necessary for their spiritual improvement, such as we may hope is the case with those who are more stationary. Yet, though I did not often seek out, I never refused to visit any poor traveller who desired to see me. Of course, my name must, in every case, have been mentioned to persons of this class. Many tales of sorrow have thus been poured into my ear, most extraordinary revelations have been made. Thus I, one morning in the winter, spent some time in a very low part of my district, in finding the residence of a family whose name had been given me, and the mother of which had expressed anxiety to see "a minister." I found these people in a lodging-house where, as the signboard informed me, there was "entertainment for travellers," and here—"a fearful scene presented itself, of which I can give no adequate description. Several persons in the most deplorable condition were huddled round a fire in the down stairs room, the woman who had wished for my coming among the rest. Her child was ill, and I accompanied the poor creature up dark staircases to the top room of the house where there were four beds, all in a wretchedly dirty condition, three of which were occupied by persons, each of them in an advanced state of illness, the child I had come to see being one of them. The mother appeared to have out-lived all save a mere animal and instinctive feeling. I saw at once the child could not recover, in fact it died within two or three days of my call, and the object in sending for me was evidently to get something for present subsistence. The parish allowance was miserable, and fourpence per night was charged for the bed. But the tenant of the adjoining bed was, if possible, in

a more miserable plight. She was the wife of an itinerant musician. The man in tatters was by her side, doing his best to soothe her, but with very little effect. Both were suffering from want, and the woman was nearly exhausted by it. It was a time of commercial distress, when the skilled mechanic found it difficult to get employment; the ministers to mere luxury, especially the inferior ones, were left to starve. I did what I could to remove the immediate pressure of want, and I begged all present to join with me in prayer. The poor musician was in tears; a greater amount of distress in one room I never witnessed. It need scarcely be added, that I soon lost all trace of the persons who were then and there assembled.

Of all diseases, that of consumption is the most prevalent in a crowded community. It attacks the young (and as it would seem preferably) as well as the old, and when once it has fairly set in, all hope of recovery is at an end. Numerous have been the instances I have met with of this insidious but fatal disease. The causes are usually not far to seek,—hereditary predisposition, want of due nourishment, impure air, sedentary and long-continued employment, and above all, what may be truly termed the master cause, as it is the besetting sin of the labouring classes, *intemperance*. The strong men are bowed under this disease, and they become as water. He who was the oracle of the tap-room, the life of the club, the prime singer, the loud swaggering talker, is now weak as an infant. "His big manly voice changed to childish treble;" by and by to a faint whisper, and then that whisper is lost in death. He is torn with a cough that gives him no rest; his sleep is broken and unrefreshing, and the cold night sweats too plainly indicate that the stamina of life is exhausted. Now is the time to send for the minister, that he may read and pray, and give, as it were, a passport to heaven. Being at one time requested to visit a sick person, probably one of the kind above adverted to, a neighbour, at my coming into the house, remarked, "Oh, there was no occasion to send for this gentleman yet. Mr. —— is not ill enough for that." What gross ignorance was here! I have always laboured to deal faithfully in cases where there has been great

neglect of duty, to shew the nature and the punishment of sin, at the same time not to shut out hope, commending the sick and dying to him who alone can read the heart, who knows when repentance is sincere, and who, we are assured, will in judgment remember mercy.

And here, again, we must be careful not to judge harshly; for in the worst of such cases I have found palliating circumstances,—ignorance, bad education, bad examples. Thousands, tens of thousands, are brought up under conditions the most unfavourable to temperance, purity, chastity. They are surrounded by temptations, and they hardly know good from evil. It has been well put, that when one such man, perchance on his death-bed, repents and cries with bitter anguish for pardon, for peace, it is not for us to say that even at the last hour, the last moment, he cannot be forgiven,—not for us to say that his repentance and self-abhorrence will not so plead for him, that his sins, great as they may have been, shall be at once and for ever blotted out, his iniquities be remembered no more. In the instant of dissolution he may be saved. But then we must not speak of sin as a trifle; rather let us continually warn that it is an evil and bitter thing to sin against God. Of peaceful death-beds I may speak at another time. There is no space now left for further remark.

B.

"QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT."

"Speak, Lord! thy servant heareth!"
With earnestness of will
Let us repeat those sacred words,
The Lord is speaking still,—
Speaking to every open soul
In tones of truth and power,
As to the infant Samuel
At midnight's solemn hour.

"Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth,"
Say thus, dear little child,
To the voice heard in the inner depths
Of thy spirit undefiled;
And when thy stronger passions rise
That voice shall still be there,
To quell them by the secret strength
Accorded thee in prayer.

"Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth!"
Be this, young man, thy cry,
Bring all thy powers and noble gifts
To a service great and high;
Seek thy commission from above
And surely 'twill be given;
Though long and sore the conflict be,
The victory gains heaven.

"Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth,"
We whisper in our grief,
And to our souls this trusting prayer
Brings calm, and sure relief.
It is the Lord who calleth us
Amid the gathering gloom,
And we rejoice, as many did,
Beside the riven tomb.

"Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth,"
Oh! thou oppressed with care,
And wearied with the world's bleak ways,
In reverence lift this prayer.
With patience and humility
Put self aside, and wait,
As did the innocent young child
Within the temple-gate;
And listen for the warning voice,
Accept the promised rest,
"Faithful is he that calleth you,"
And they who hear are blest.

I. A. C.

CONGREGATIONAL MEMOIRS.

No. II.—LARNE AND KILWAUGHTER—(*Concluded from p.* 348.)

IX.—Classon Porter,* third son of the late Rev. William Porter, of Newtownlimavady, in County Derry, who was for many years Clerk to the General Synod of Ulster, and afterwards to the Remonstrant Synod, of which latter Body he was the first Moderator.

Between the removal of Dr. Ledlie to Dublin, in 1832, and my settlement in Larne, in 1834, the Congregation was seriously distracted by a difference of opinion amongst its members as to the most proper person to fill the vacant pulpit. Ultimately the choice of the people fell upon myself, for no other reason than that I was my father's son. After going through the form of preaching two Sundays on trial, I received a unanimous "call," which, on the 20th April, 1834, was signed by sixty members of the Congregation (of whom only sixteen are now known to be alive), and certified to the Presbytery by Rev. D. Watson, of Clough. My ordination took place on the 2nd July, 1834. On this occasion my friend and kinsman, Rev. John Porter, Belfast, preached to my future people from the singularly appropriate text, "Let no man despise thy youth;" Rev. James Carley, Antrim, after explaining and defending Presbyterian ordination, put to me the usual questions, which I answered; Rev. Dr. Bruce, Belfast,† offered up the ordination prayer; and Rev. W. Bruce, Belfast, gave the charge to minister and people. In the evening the Congregation entertained the Presbytery to dinner, Archibald Barklie, Esq., in the chair, when nearly 100 persons were present, includ-

* For obvious reasons I had at one time intended omitting from this Memoir any reference to my own ministry in Larne and Kilwaughter. But for the sake of my successors, amongst whom, in the course of years, may possibly arise some Dryasdust like myself, I am induced to put together the facts and dates—I shall do no more—concerning this period of our Congregational history.

† I believe I was the last person whom Dr. Bruce ordained, or at least the last person in whose case he offered up the ordination prayer. Dare I venture, in this liberal age, to confess that a thrill passed through my "whole spirit and soul and body," as I knelt, a beardless boy, at the feet of this majestic old man, and felt my youthful head pressed by his princely and priestly hand. He was indeed the worthy representative of a race of kings.

ing three clergymen of the Established Church, and ministers and gentry of all religious denominations. (See *Bible Christian*, v. 335.)

1836, *Jan.*—Larne and Kilwaughter Congregational Library established.

1837, *Jan.*—Larne and Kilwaughter Sunday School established.

1837, *Aug.* 15.—Address presented by the Congregation to Dr. Ledlie on occasion of his first visit to Larne, after his removal to Dublin, to which he made a most touching reply. (*Bible Christian*, viii. 285.)

1838, *Jan.* 15.—Soiree of Larne and Kilwaughter Sunday School, being one of the first (in this country) and certainly one of the most successful of this now popular class of entertainments. (See *Bible Christian*, ix. 36.)

1838, *Sept.* 2.—New Meeting-house at Raloo opened for public worship. (See *Bible Christian*, ix. 327.)

1838, *Nov.*—A separate Sunday School established in parish of Kilwaughter.

1838, *Dec.*—The same in new Congregation of Raloo.

1839, *July* 11.—Foundation stone laid by my father of our present School-house, which was built on our Congregational property, and which was finished during the year at a cost of about £200. The subscriptions amounted to about half this sum. Two sermons produced about £60 more, and the balance, which was advanced by Mr. A. Barklie, was repaid with interest from sale of needle-work done at the Female Industrial School, which for some years was taught in this School-house under the kind, efficient, and gratuitous superintendence of my late excellent friend, Miss Park, of Larne.

1840, *Aug.* 5.—A visitation meeting in Larne of Antrim Presbytery, which was attended by Messrs. Miles Atkinson and Samuel Drummond, as Commissioners from our Session, and by Messrs. A. Barklie and George Whitla, J.P., as Commissioners from our Congregation. In the evening the annual entertainment was given in the School-house to the children of the three Sunday Schools of Larne, Kilwaughter, and Raloo, at which 437 children were present. (See *Northern Whig*, August 8, 1840.)

1841, *May* 2.—Congregational address adopted, which was afterwards presented, with 300 signatures, to Rev. Dr. Montgomery and Rev. J. Scott Porter, on occasion of some matters connected with their appointment as Professors of Theology to the Irish Non-Subscribing Association. (For address and reply see *Whig*, May 8, 1841.)

1841, *May* 16.—The Lord's Supper administered by the minister in the parish of Kilwaughter to about fifty communicants, and in the presence of an immense congregation. The reason of this unprecedented occurrence was that a great many of the country members of the Congregation had been hindered by the extreme inclemency of the weather from attending on the previous celebration of that ordinance in Larne.

1841, *Aug.* 19.—Annual entertainment given in the Kilwaughter demesne to the children of the three Sunday Schools of Larne, Kilwaughter, and Raloo, which was attended by 540 children.

1844.—Dissenters' Chapels Bill passed. (See newspapers and periodicals of the day). Our Congregation contributed towards expenses about £50.

1852.—Our Meeting-house thoroughly repaired and painted, also lighted with gas, since which time we have had evening service all the year round, in addition to the usual morning service. During the course of these repairs, which cost about £130, divine service was conducted in our large and commodious School-house.

1855.—An harmonium purchased by the Congregation (at an expense of about £70) to assist the psalmody, and a professional musician appointed for one year, at a salary of £40, to perform on the harmonium and instruct the choir.

1855, *July* 18.—The Non-Subscribing Association, which had met in Larne, entertained by the Congregation to dinner in the School-house, A. Barklie, Esq., in the chair. (See *Northern Whig*, July 21, 1855.)

1857.—Meeting-house green considerably enlarged, and enclosed with a stone wall, at a cost of about £150, towards which Miss Park, shortly before her death, contributed £20.

1859, 1860.—The "Revivals" returned to Larne after an absence of 230 years. Special week-day religious

services were introduced and continued for a time, but gradually fell into disuse, as the source from which they sprang subsided. Larne and Kilwaughter Young Men's Christian Association established.

1862, *Jan.* 12.—The Congregation, at a crowded meeting, of which previous notice had been given from the pulpit, unanimously adopted a resolution approving of their minister's conduct in certain recent matters which soon afterwards led to the disruption of the Presbytery of Antrim, and pledging themselves to adhere to his ministry in any new ecclesiastical connexion which he might think it prudent to form for himself and them.

1862, *Feb.* 21.—The Congregation, by its minister and lay representative, withdrew from the Presbytery of Antrim, with which it had been uninterruptedly connected since the formation of that Presbytery in 1726, and united with the Congregations of 1st Belfast, Antrim, Holywood, and Ballyclare, in founding the Northern Presbytery of Antrim, under whose jurisdiction it is now placed.

During my ministry in Larne and Kilwaughter, which has now extended to more than 30 years, I have baptized 1060 children; married 221 couples, and officiated at 303 interments. Within the same period the Congregation has contributed towards the support of public worship, and other Congregational purposes, including stipend to minister, about £3700. It has always efficiently met its own charges, without asking aid from strangers; and I believe I may add, that its members have not been slow in availing themselves of opportunities (with which they have been abundantly favoured), of contributing towards the assistance of them that are without. The Congregation is not in debt one farthing, but considerably the reverse.

Our extant Congregational Records are—

I.—A transcript in folio leaves of part of an old Session Book, relating to the settlement of Mr. Ogilvie, and the first two years of his ministry, 1699 to 1701. (See back, pp. 409 and 410). I am sorry to say that I am still ignorant of the hiding-place of the original of this document. I fear it is irrecoverably lost. All the material parts of the transcript have been printed in previous portions of this Memoir.

II.—John Finlay's old Session Book, 1721 to 1769. (See back, p. 269, note). This Book, which is in small 4to., and bound in calf, contains—

1. Baptisms, arranged according to the districts of the Congregation, of the children of such parents as paid the Session Clerk's fee of one shilling.
2. Marriages in the Congregation, p. 90, *et seq.*
3. Accounts of public money and poor's money, pp. 10, 30, 300.
4. Receipts from morcloth and legacies, p. 300.
5. Libels and defamations, pp. 136 to 143.
6. Appearances of fornicators, p. 60.
7. Satisfactions of fornicators, p. 70.
8. Marriages with a Popish priest, pp. 60 and 78.
9. Satisfactions for such marriages, p. 300.
10. Communion days, from 1721 to 1768, pp. 9 and 18.

III.—Two small 4to. books, stitched, containing the register of marriages and baptisms solemnized by Mr. Worrall, beginning March 20, 1796, and ending December 22, 1803.

IV.—A Session Book, in long 8vo., containing sundry entries, from August, 1789, to March 31, 1860.

V.—A large 8vo. volume, containing a register of—

1. Baptisms and marriages celebrated by Dr. Ledlie; which, however, does not begin until 1826, so that there is now no available record of these matters for the first 18 years of Dr. Ledlie's ministry.
2. Baptisms between Dr. Ledlie's resignation, in 1832, and my ordination, in 1834. This part of the Register is, I am sure, very imperfect.
3. Baptisms during my ministry; and marriages, from July 2, 1834, to April 1, 1845, when the Marriage Act came into operation.

Our Congregational Property consists of a Meeting-house and School-house, beautifully situated within an enclosed green, covering altogether about an English acre of ground, and tastefully planted with shrubs and venerable trees. Truly "the lines are fallen unto us in pleasant places; yea, we have a goodly heritage; we will bless the Lord." As to Communion Plate, I am sorry to say we have none worthy of notice, either for its age or value.

Our Congregational Funds, in addition to the annual contributions of members, are—

1. One Hundred Pounds bequeathed to our Congregation by William Johnston, Esq., of Larne and Demerara, who died in 1839.

2. Fifty Pounds similarly bequeathed by Mr. Johnston's half-brother, A. H. Kirkpatrick, Esq., of Larne, who died at Demerara, in 1857. These two legacies, by prudent management, have increased to £250.

In addition to the foregoing, Miss Rachel Kirk, of Larne, who died in 1858, bequeathed to me the sum of One Hundred Pounds, for the benefit of myself and my successors. Owing to various circumstances this legacy has not yet been realized, but I do not, on that account, feel the less grateful to my departed friend for this generous and unsolicited token of her confidence and regard. And finally, our late fellow-worshipper, Thomas Kirkpatrick, Esq., of Larne, who died in January last, and was brother to two of our previous benefactors, bequeathed to our Congregation, by his will, the sum of One Hundred Pounds.*

On the walls of the vestibule of our Meeting-House are neat mural tablets with the following inscriptions, beginning at the south wall:—

I.—"Sacred to the Memory of Alexander Holmes Kirkpatrick, who departed this life, in Demerara, on the 20th January, 1857, aged 41."

II.—"Erected by the First Presbyterian Congregation of Larne, in memory of William Johnston, Esq., a native of this town, but latterly resident in Demerara, who, in addition to other legacies, bequeathed the sum of One Hundred Pounds in aid of the funds

* Another handsome legacy, in the distribution of which I know that the generous testatrix intended me to have a share, should here be mentioned, although I am aware that it is not strictly Congregational. The late Miss Jones, of Kilwaughter Castle, who died in 1848, bequeathed by her will, and a codicil thereto, the sum altogether of Seven Hundred Pounds "to the Poor of the Parish of Kilwaughter, without distinction of religion, to be distributed and applied as the clergymen of the Established, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic Churches connected therewith shall consider most useful." Owing to a legal informality in the wording of the above bequest, which, from not designating the intended distributors by name as well as by office, renders it impossible for any one to give the executors a valid receipt, the foregoing legacy has unfortunately lapsed: but its amount, and the terms of characteristic liberality in which it was bequeathed, are most honourable to the intending donor, who was indeed one of the excellent of the earth.

of this worshipping society, with which he was connected in early life. A.D., MDCCCXXXIX."

III.—"In memory of MARGARET MONTGOMERY PARK, who, living and dead, was a benefactress of this Congregation, and of the Schools connected with it. Born October 6, 1778; died August 19, 1854."

IV.—"Sacred to the memory of ALEXANDER HOLMES, of Larne, who departed this life October 16, 1844, aged 32 years, and was buried in the Bay of Bengal, off Ceylon, whilst returning to his native country after nineteen years' residence abroad. Most dear to the memory of all who knew him."

In our Meeting-house Green is one square enclosure surrounded by iron railing, within which is a stone bearing the following inscription :—

"In memory of JANE LEDLIE, daughter to the Rev. J. C. Ledlie, D.D., who died 12th December, 1830, aged 18 years."

The following list of worthies who were connected with Larne by birth may be welcomed by some, and excused by others, of my readers, as an appropriate conclusion of the present Congregational Memoir :—

1. The father of Rev. Thomas Drennan, and grandfather of the amiable and accomplished Dr. William Drennan, both of Belfast, came from Larne. (*Christian Moderator*, i. 429.)

2. Rev. Robert White, minister of Templepatrick from 1755 to 1772.

3. Rev. Matthew Lynd, who about 1761 was ordained at Vow, near Rasharkin, and was the first Covenanting minister settled in Ireland, was a native of Larne. Mr. Lynd resided at Newtownlimavady, and extended his labours (which in area, as I doubt not in spirit, were truly apostolical) through the County of Derry, and parts of the Counties of Antrim and Donegal. (*Reid*, iii. 440, Note.)

4. Rev. William Hamilton Drummond, D.D., of Dublin, still living.

5. Rev. David Whyte, Ballee, still living.

6. Rev. George Hay, for many years the beloved and universally respected minister of Londonderry, and also the generous and considerate Agent for distribution of Royal Bounty.

7. Rev. William Moore, of Cork, and afterwards of Londonderry, whose merits as a man and a teacher are gratefully recorded by a former pupil in the *Bible Christian* for 1842, at p. 142.

8. The late Dr. Patrick, of Ballymena, was also a native of the neighbourhood of Larne; and no one who knew Dr. Patrick's eminent theological, as well as medical, attainments, will allege that his name is at all out of place on the present list.

In conclusion, I may mention that, after the most particular inquiries, I have not been able to find the slightest trace, traditional or otherwise, of any minister of any church having been born in the parish of Kilwaughter. In this respect that parish is perhaps singular amongst the parishes of Ulster. Whether, in thus persistently withstanding the attractions of the sacerdotal stole, it has been singularly wise or singularly foolish we need not stop to inquire; but certainly the charm which has lasted so long, is not now likely to be broken, at least not for many a year to come.

CLASSON PORTER.

LARNE, *Nov.* 16, 1864.

THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

THE Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, or the Holy Ghost—what is it? We meet with the term frequently in the Scriptures. It has been the subject of much discussion among divines, and various theories have been formed in order to explain particular expressions that have been used respecting it in the Word of God. We do not stop to examine these theories,—a task which would be worse than useless; but we think we are safe in stating that ordinary readers of Scripture, when their minds are not biased by certain theological prejudices, will understand the spirit of God to mean God himself in his energy or influence operating in creation, providence, or the human soul. When we read in the Mosaic account of the creation that "the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters," we do not for a moment suppose that it was a being or person distinct from God, our heavenly Father, but we believe it to be God himself, by his almighty working, reducing chaos into the order of created nature. When the Psalmist, filled with a sense of God's all-pervading presence, exclaims, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence," we

understand him to refer to God himself. So in like manner, when the Saviour speaks of casting out demons by the spirit of God, we believe him to say that he casts them out by God's power, or, as one of the Evangelists expresses it, "with the finger of God." The simplest view of the subject, and that moreover which may substantially harmonize conflicting theories, is, to regard the spirit of God as neither more nor less than God himself, working in nature and in the human soul. If we attempt to analyze the Deity, and to understand what is his nature, we necessarily fail. Try to analyze man in his mental and spiritual being, and you fail. What is mind? What is that mysterious principle which we call life, whether it be the intellectual, spiritual, or animal life? We know the mind by its operations, and thus we may attempt to know God; but to comprehend his nature is far beyond the limits of human thought.

But though we cannot sound the depths of God's spirit, and fully comprehend its nature, its manifestations are diffused through every department of existence, —every portion of the universe. How wonderfully it works in matter around us, forming from the simplest elements the beautiful variety of created beings, and all the glorious furniture of the globe; and above, below, and around us, through the immeasurable extent of space, spreading out worlds innumerable, and, we may believe, filling them with objects as numerous, and with beings as varied as those which crowd this planet!

God's spirit is manifested in providence: it is his energy that sustains the vast fabric of nature, that gives to the planets their ceaseless motions, and to our hearts their continued pulsation, that supports the greatest and the smallest of living creatures, that causes the leaves to fall in autumn, and that in spring renews the face of the earth. That spirit

> "Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
> Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees;
> Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
> Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
> Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
> As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;
> As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,
> As the rapt seraph that adores and burns."

But when, in connexion with religion, we speak of the spirit of God, we commonly think of it as it is referred to in Revelation. When the Baptist is describing Christ he says, "God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him;" and, as if to proclaim to the world that that holy spirit was abundantly bestowed on him, it is represented as descending in a bodily form at the time of his baptism, and abiding on him in its enlightening and sanctifying influence. Thus we trace to the spirit of God the mighty works by which Jesus was proved to be the Son of God; and the holy and precious truths which he uttered were the promptings of God's spirit, revealed through him for the instruction and salvation of the world. It cannot be supposed that by this view we detract from the importance of Christ. We rather magnify him in representing him as the revealer of the mind and will of God; and we establish a union between God in nature and in Christ, in regarding the same divine spirit as working in all, spreading out the glories of creation, sustaining all with providential care, and unfolding to those whom God made in his own image, truths that are precious and comforting in time, and that lift the soul into eternity, and fit it for the possession of so bright an inheritance.

God's spirit, working thus in nature and in Christ, visits every human being, not bestowing upon them miraculous power, or revealing new truths, or communicating to them "the gift of tongues," but imparting a holy influence that may draw the soul away from sin, and inspire it with a love of God and of goodness. In various ways God's spirit visits us. Have you paused at noon, or eventide, or in the freshness of morning, to look upon the glories that were spread around you in the bright spring time, the glowing summer, or in the richness of autumn, and as you contemplated such a scene, have not holy emotions stirred within your soul? Was it not the spirit of God speaking to your spirit? At such a season no thought of sin possesses the mind; the heart for a time is brought near to God. When, in the house of prayer, the comparative indifference with which the Scriptures are heard is for a moment disturbed, and some striking word of Christ falls upon our ear, stirring the mind to serious thought; or when, in our private reading,

some word of promise or of warning fixes our attention, or, in the silent night-watches, rises to our mind—God's spirit seems to visit us. And even when no fair scene of nature awakens our admiration, and no word of holy writ impresses our heart,—sometimes in the hours of business or the hours of leisure, holy thoughts, we know not how, come over us,—kindly, generous, or devout feelings. Does not God seem thus directly to touch us with his spirit?

Many events in life seem to open the heart for the entrance of God's spirit. The true and faithful witness is represented in the Book of Revelation as seeking admission—"Behold I stand at the door and knock." Events in God's providence help to gain an entrance for that spirit which would come to bless and to save. Who has not felt the softening and subduing influence of sickness or suffering—how it seems to welcome the visitation of the Holy Spirit, and rejoice in all pure, devout, and loving thoughts! Disappointments and losses, in like manner, waken the soul to higher themes, and prepare it for the truths, solemn but glorious, which the spirit would reveal. And so does death—the death of friend or neighbour—the death of the young, struck down when they had just started in life's race, or the aged pressed down by the weight of years, teaching us that, though we may see many days, the end of life's pilgrimage is the grave.

If God's spirit is thus manifested in nature, and if every word of Christ is laden with it; if it comes in the hour of holy meditation, and seeks us through the events of our chequered life, how comes it that every soul is not bathed with its influence—that we do not seek and cherish it? How comes it that it is so seldom recognised, and so little felt? We may find an answer in the remarkable words of Paul—"Quench not the spirit." We quench it by committing sin, by indulging unholy thoughts, by giving ourselves entirely to worldly pursuits, or by seeking to drive away serious feelings in gaiety and dissipation. How directly deeds of sin stifle the holy flame; and how often has the gaming-house or the tavern checked the dawnings of a better life, and sunk into sin and wretchedness him who, under the sanctifying in-

fluences of God's spirit, might have risen to the dignity of a child of God!

Though we may be thoughtless and sinful, though we may in worldliness and pleasure forget God and duty, God's spirit is still flowing forth for those who will seek it. As the fragrance of flowers may fill the air, though there be none to enjoy it, and as their brightness may be there, though there be none to behold it, so God's spirit fills the atmosphere in which the soul lives, whether we cherish or resist it. What holier office in prayer, what nobler effort in life, than to seek that Spirit which brings peace and joy!

MR. SPURGEON AND THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER.

A LATE number of the *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* contains a sermon by the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, entitled, "Thus saith the Lord," or "The Book of Common Prayer weighed in the Balances of the Sanctuary." Most of our readers are aware that this popular Calvinistic preacher has been attacking the forms and doctrines of the Established Church, and in this sermon, after dwelling on the power and authority of the Word of God, as exhibited in his text, "Thus saith the Lord," he thus proceeds:—

"I open this book—the Prayer Book, of whose occasional service, the more I know, the less I approve—and I find in the *Baptismal Service*, that when little children are brought to be sprinkled, certain godfathers and godmothers promise for them that they shall renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, &c., and that they shall obediently keep all God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of their life. To me it seems that they might as well promise that the infants should grow up with Roman noses, auburn hair, and blue eyes, for they are just as able to make them do the one as the other. I shall not, however, intrude my opinion further, but simply ask whether there is a 'Thus saith the Lord' for any man's standing proxy for a babe, and making such promises in its name?—in other words, I ask for apostolical, prophetic, or any other form of Scriptural precept, or precedent, for the use of proxies in baptism. True religion is a personal matter—is its first manifestation in Regeneration to be connected with the impossible promises of others? Plain proof texts are requested for godfathers and godmothers; and such important persons deserve to be defended by the clergy, if texts of Scripture can be discovered. As I cannot imagine where the texts will be found, I must pause till the learned shall produce them. Further, I find that these children enter into a covenant by proxy, of which we are assured that *the promise* our Lord Jesus will for *his* part most surely keep and perform; but the children are bound to do *their* part, that part being something more than the gigantic task of keeping all the commandments of God. Now I ask for a 'Thus saith

the Lord' for such a covenant as this. . . . . We then find that after this covenant has been made, and the water has been applied in a manner which we think needs also a 'Thus saith the Lord' to justify it, it is publicly declared that the babe is regenerated—'Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's Church, let us give thanks unto Almighty God for these benefits, and with one accord make our prayers unto him, that this child may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning.' And, again, 'We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into thy holy Church.' &c. We are told we do not understand the meaning of 'Regeneration' as it is used in the Services of the Anglican Church; the meaning of this passage is historical, hypothetical, ecclesiastical, and we know not what. The words 'To be born again' did not formerly seem to us to be so very difficult to understand, nor do they appear so now as they stand in Scripture, for we find in them the one regeneration which has renewed us in the Spirit of our mind, and we cannot consent to use those words in any other sense. Well, whether regeneration be or be not a very equivocal word, we simply ask, is there a 'Thus saith the Lord' for the assertion that a sprinkled infant is therefore regenerate in any sense in the world? Will any person find us a text of Scripture?—He shall have large rewards from clergymen with uneasy consciences! We put our enquiry again in plain terms; will some one oblige us with a plain 'Thus saith the Lord,' proving that water baptism in any one instance makes an unconscious babe a member of Christ and a child of God, in any sense which any sane person chooses to attach to those words? Where is the passage? where? Echo answers, 'Where?'

"I have a second question to ask. There is prescribed in the book of Common Prayer a peculiar ceremony called *Confirmation*. I do not remember to have read of that in Scripture, I would like to have a 'Thus saith the Lord' for that rite. As I am ready to yield as far as possible, suppose we take it for granted that this ceremony is defensible from Holy Writ, I would like to know whether there is any 'Thus saith the Lord' allowing a person called a bishop to give to the assembled youth an assurance of divine favour by laying his hands on their heads? The bishop having laid his hands on every head presented to him, whether it be gracious or graceless, talks thus in the collect, 'Almighty and everliving God, who makest us both to will and to do those things that be good and acceptable unto thy divine majesty; we make our humble supplications unto thee for *these thy servants upon whom (after the example of thy holy apostles,) we have now laid our hands to certify them (by this sign) of thy favour and gracious goodness towards them.*' Does this mean that the bishop's hand certifies the person touched thereby of special divine favour? so it seems to teach, as far as I can see. We want, then, a 'Thus saith the Lord,' authorizing this individual in lawn to exercise the office of an apostle! We then desire Scriptural warrant permitting him to certify these kneeling youths of the enjoyment or possession of any particular divine favour by putting his hands on their heads. If this means the common goodness of God, the bishop's hands are not needed to certify them of that; but as he has already declared in prayer that they were regenerated by water and the Spirit, and had been forgiven all their sins, it is clear that special favour is intended; we enquire, therefore, for his authority for giving these young people a further certificate of special divine favour by the imposition of his hands.

"Another matter needs a little clearing up, and, as this Book was set forth by learned divines and bishops, I would like a lucid explanation. The priest visits a sick man, sits down by his bed-side, reads certain prayers, bids the patient remember his baptism, questions him as to his creed, gives him good advice about forgiving his enemies and making his will, moves him to make a special confession of his sin if he feels his conscience troubled with any weighty matter, after which confession the rubric says, 'the priest shall absolve him (if he humbly and heartily desire it), after this sort.' Here is the absolution, and I humbly and heartily desire a 'Thus saith the Lord' for it. 'Our Lord Jesus Christ, who has left power to his Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in him, of his great mercy forgive thee thine offences: and *by his authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.*' Sir Priest, I want you to give me a plain warrant from God's Word for your absolving my dying neighbour at this rate. Who are you that you should use such words? The season is solemn, it is the hour of death; and the matter is weighty, for it concerns the eternal interests of the dying man, and may, nay, will, if you be found to be acting persumptuously in this matter, involve your own soul in eternal ruin. Whence did you derive your right to forgive that sick man? Might he not raise his withered hands and return the compliment by absolving you? Are you quite sure as to the committal of divine authority to you? then show me the deed of gift, and let it be clearly of divine origin.

"I turn on and find that when the sick dies, he is buried in consecrated ground, and though he may have cut his throat while under *delirium tremens*—if the jury do not return a verdict of suicide, the priest shall say, as he casts earth upon the body, 'Forasmuch as it hath pleased the Almighty God of his great mercy to take unto himself the soul of our dear brother here departed, we therefore commit his body to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life.' And again, 'We give thee hearty thanks for that it hath pleased thee to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world;' and yet again, 'We meekly beseech thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness; that when we shall depart this life, we may rest in him, as our hope is this our brother doth.' We beg a 'Thus saith the Lord' for burying every baptized thief, harlot, rogue, drunkard, and liar, who may die in the parish 'in sure and certain hope of the blessed resurrection.' 'O! it is commanded by authority.' What authority? We challenge it, and permit none to pass muster but a 'Thus saith the Lord.' Until clergymen will bring us Scriptural warrant for uttering falsehoods over a grave, we dare not cease our testimony against them. How long will the many godly laymen in that Church remain quiet? Why do the not bestir themselves and demand revision or disruption?"

Admitting the force of Mr. Spurgeon's argument against the portions of the Church of England Service Book which he criticises, we are naturally led to inquire why he does not carry farther his principle of bringing everything to the test of Scripture and common sense, and does not, in a similar strain, expose other errors that are at least as palpable. He would search in vain for a "Thus saith the Lord" to support the definition of the Trinity contained in the Athanasian Creed, or any definition of the Trinity at all. And so in vain he might look for authority in Scripture or

reason to justify the damnatory clauses of that creed, which are a reproach not merely to the Christianity, but to the humanity of all who directly or indirectly countenance them. What word of the Lord, again, in nature or Revelation, could be found teaching men to beseech God by his "Nativity and Circumcision," by his "Baptism, Fasting, and Temptation," by his "Agony and Bloody Sweat," by his "Cross and Passion," by his "precious Death and Burial," and by his "glorious Resurrection and Ascension"? If Mr. Spurgeon will *go through* with the text he has applied to the Book of Common Prayer, he will find that it will expose not only errors that have crept into the Church of England, but also the false doctrines held by many dissenting Churches, including that of which Mr. Spurgeon is the most popular, though not the most learned, minister.

THE LATE REV. JAMES WORRALL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN UNITARIAN.

Sir,—It is an old maxim which, though of heathen origin, is not unworthy even of Christian observance, namely, "Of the dead, nothing unless good." And had this maxim been observed by the author of "Congregational Memoirs," in your journal, I would not have troubled you, as I now do, to publish these lines. But in your October number that writer has assailed (and I think unjustly) the memory of the late Rev. James Worrall—once my pastor—whom I, and all who knew him personally, esteemed most highly as a man of the highest honour, integrity, and truth, however little some may now know of, or appreciate, such qualities. And as there remain but few now who had the benefit of that intercourse, I deem it the more a sacred duty on my part to vindicate his memory.

Mr. Worrall was not only "by birth connected with the Established Church, and educated for its ministry," as this writer truly states, but had he chosen to silence his religious scruples, to act the hypocrite throughout life, and maintain his connection with it, which, as our author says, "might have been as well for him," he might certainly have looked forward to a much higher worldly position in that Church, than he could ever hope to obtain by acting honestly as he did. It is well known that a leading member of our Irish aristocracy took a warm interest in Mr. Worrall, and would not have failed to aid in his advancement, nor did he fail to benefit the family after his decease. But such was not Mr. Worrall's morality, although it has exposed him to the reproach of one, as I am led to believe, his successor in the Larne ministry.

Of his surrender while in Larne of "the Kilwaughter stipend," for which this writer so much blames him, it is not necessary to say anything, save this, that Mr. Worrall's refusal of it could not, in point *of law*, prejudice the right of his successor if enforced, and if the claim were, in fact, just and legal. But on this point the reader will judge for himself, whether Mr. Worrall's conduct or

this writer's animadversions on it be the more consistent with that qualification of a bishop, specified by the Apostle, "not covetous," "not greedy of filthy lucre."

Of "Mr. Worrall's *intimate* connexion with the unfortunate affairs of '98" I had never heard before, and can say nothing, save that he was a man of liberal mind, and in such minds *civil* and religious liberty are usually associated. If "an United Irishman," as is here stated, he was no unworthy associate of many honourable, however mistaken, men, whose names their country will not cease to prize, when that of this author is long forgotten. But when he goes on to accuse Mr. Worrall, without evidence, of complicity in "measures contemplated, if not perpetrated, against hearers of his own," he takes, in my mind, a most unjustifiable liberty with the memory of the dead. That he speaks not from evidence is manifest. He says, "*I fear* that Mr. Worrall went further still. *I fear* that Mr. W. did so and so." And what have this author's *fears* to do with circumstances of which it is evident he knows but little? Are his fears *facts* on which he is to presume to asperse the character of one he admits to have been "an amiable and accomplished gentleman,"—of a predecessor in the ministry who has gone to his account,—of a man known for honour and integrity in all the relations of life?

But this writer is not content with aspersing Mr. Worrall's conduct as a minister of Larne Congregation, of which he is writing the memoirs. He must follow him to Clonmel, where he finds him "politically a changed man," and says, "I have been told, on excellent authority, that he there went in politics to an extreme the very opposite of that which he had touched in Larne." Whether "the authority" on which he relies would be esteemed an "excellent" one *in Clonmel*, I have serious doubts. At least I have been informed, on excellent authority there, that Mr. Worrall was most highly esteemed up to the day of his death by the leading men of all sects and parties in Clonmel, and by none more so than members of the Roman Catholic Church. In addition to his Congregation, he had a school which was attended by the sons of the leading merchants and gentry in and around Clonmel, whether Quaker, Presbyterian, or Protestant. His "Protestant zeal," therefore, could not have greatly "*shocked* even the Orange squires," much less those who entrusted him with the education of their boys. So that on the whole our author's information, it appears to me, is about equal to the morality of his last paragraph, in which he thinks it would have been perhaps as well for Mr. Worrall had he not yielded to his conscientious convictions by leaving the Church of his youth, but acted the hypocrite all his life!!!—I am, &c.,

ONE FROM LARNE.

P.S.—On Mrs. Ledlie's authority, I can state that when Dr. Ledlie succeeded Mr. Worrall in Larne, he entered an intelligent, intellectual, well-instructed, united Unitarian Congregation, and he left it as he found it.

ENGLAND FOR THE ENGLISH.

In the course of the past three months there have appeared various articles in *The London Inquirer*, some from the Editor, and others from several correspondents, commenting, in severe terms, on applications alleged to have been made by parties in this country for aid towards congregational objects, and stigmatising the applicants as "Irish mendicants." It appears that the Congregation of Ravara, in County Down, has been endeavouring to erect a manse, and the minister, who had till lately been settled in an English Congregation and was well known to many in that country, naturally thought that friends and others there might be disposed to assist in the proposed object. His expectations may have been heightened by the knowledge, that to another minister of the same popular Presbytery—the Rev. John Hall—contributions had, for an object not more deserving, been liberally forwarded from various parts of the sister kingdom. He soon found, however, that he was under a grievous mistake, for he had not been many days in England till a rude attack was made upon him in *The Inquirer*, and the impropriety of seeking English aid, in behalf of what was represented as a small and nearly extinct congregation in an obscure district of Ireland, was dwelt on in harsh and merciless terms. *The Inquirer* did not see the awkward inconsistency of thus decrying a congregation, which, not long before, it had magnified, chuckling over its secession from the Remonstrant Synod, and parading it before its readers as "another triumph to the liberal party." What the particular state and statistics of Ravara Congregation may be, we have no means of accurately knowing; compared with the numerous and flourishing Unitarian Congregations that are spread over the rural districts of England, it may appear small and contemptible indeed; but may its very weakness not be its strongest claim to the assistance of the generous? It is possible that *The Inquirer* had, for the time, forgotten that this poor Congregation had thrown itself into the cause of "absolute free inquiry," and hence, it may be, the harsh and heartless terms in which its minister was assailed.

More recently there appears in the same journal another abusive letter against "Irish mendicants," provoked by the report that some Irish minister was seeking English help towards the erection of a Church. Who the minister is we have been unable to learn, and, for aught we know to the contrary, it may be one of those imposture cases which sometimes occur, and of which an example was presented before the Manchester magistrates last week, when a certain Englishman was convicted of having obtained money under false pretences, alleging that he was collecting funds to aid in erecting a Unitarian Chapel. Against all cases of imposture it is right that, both in England and in Ireland, we should be on our guard; but we trust that the principle of *England for the English*, virtually advocated in these virulent attacks on Irish ministers and congregations, is not generally entertained by our English Unitarian brethren. To their liberality we are largely indebted; to many of our Chapels they have contributed most generously; and it is right to add, that to English ministers who, in Ulster, had

sought similar aid, contributions have been freely given, though less frequently and less liberally, we admit, as the numbers and wealth of the Unitarian body in the two countries are very different. We hope that, notwithstanding the exclusive policy advocated in the columns of *The Inquirer*, the same readiness will be manifested as hitherto, both in England and Ireland, to help any really deserving object in connexion with the Unitarian Church, no matter from which side of the channel the application may come.

The writers whom we have seen occasion thus to notice sneer at our brogue and our *Regium Donum*. That our accent may sound strange to refined English ears, we are free to admit. Even Paul's rudeness of speech sounded harshly to the cultivated Athenians; but they listened and were instructed: and so in many an English pulpit the Irish brogue has been heard, and heard with acceptance and profit. About the wisdom of *Regium Donum* there is a diversity of opinion here, as well as in England; but we know that some declaim against it without any fixed principle of opposition,—witness the English minister who, in his uncalled-for letter on the Ballyclare case, so violently condemned it, while it turned out that he had been himself a suitor for it some time before, and did not take it simply because he could not get it.

INTELLIGENCE.

SCOTTISH UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

The annual sermons in behalf of this Association were preached in Glasgow, on Sunday, October 30th, by the Rev. J. Page Hopps of Dukinfield. Many friends were present from Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Paisley, and other districts.

The business meeting was held on Monday, October 31st, when the Rev. H. W. Crosskey, one of the Secretaries, submitted the report of the committee. A favourable account was given of the labours of the missionary at Aberdeen and Dundee. The open-air services conducted at Aberdeen had been re-invigorated and strengthened during the past year. The committee deem it desirable that the missionary should continue at Aberdeen for the present winter, visiting Dundee every month, in order to sustain the society already organised in that town, until some more permanent arrangement can be made. The monthly service at Dundee, given during the past year, has resulted in the formation of a society with upwards of fifty members, and an attendance of seventy or eighty in the morning, and between one and two hundred in the evening. With these results from merely a monthly service, there is great hope that a missionary settled in the district would soon find a self-supporting church. At the instance of the association, Mr. Crosskey has conducted a series of services in Paisley. The case of Girvan must also be considered by the association, the

lamented death of Mr. Scott having left that congregation without the means of continuing regular worship. After the adoption of the report, Ivie Mackie, Esq., was elected President, Revs. H. W. Crosskey and R. B. Drummond, Secretaries, and J. Warren, Esq., Aberdeen, Treasurer, with an executive committee. After the discussion of various matters relating to the work of the coming year, a hearty vote of thanks was passed to the Rev. J. P. Hopps for his sermons on the previous day.

The annual soiree of the Association was held, at seven o'clock, in the Merchants' Hall, and was largely attended. Ivie Mackie, Esq, presided. A blessing having been asked, tea was served, after which, a hymn being sung, the Chairman introduced the proceedings with some appropriate and happy remarks.

The Rev. W. Sharman gave a detailed account of his labours in Aberdeen, the locality to which, by direction of the Committee, he had given most of his time. There, he said, we had a chapel and a small congregation, who had the faithfulness of thirty years, adhering to us amid great difficulties, to plead for them. During the last winter our services there, on the whole, were, I think, tolerably successful; but when the summer came we found it necessary to adopt a further order of proceeding. It was found that while we got exceedingly good audiences during the winter evenings, yet the people, following a very natural and very praiseworthy instinct, preferred roaming in the fields to coming on the Sunday evening to church. In Aberdeen the custom of open air preaching prevails to a very large extent. I grant, that, in itself, I feel no very great sympathy with open-air preaching; but in the present state of the public mind, I think it is an opportunity of which in exceptional circumstances we should avail ourselves. Feeling this, I determined to try the experiment of addressing short expositions of Unitarianism to audiences in the open air. I felt assured that I had a theology to bring before them which rested on no metaphysical subtlety, but rested on those great principles of our nature which most assuredly, whenever there is a faithful exposition of them given, find ready response in the hearts of those who listen. Feeling this, we announced a series of open air expositions to be given at a place frequently used during fine weather for open-air religious exercises. Here came all imaginable sorts of people, with all imaginable sorts of messages, and all imaginable means whereby to save all men's souls. The first Sunday's gathering was far beyond our expectations, some five hundred people assembling and listening with the greatest attention. The following Sunday there were nearly a thousand; and here let me say that this number was steadily maintained during the whole time the services continued, and that the attention given was in all cases most quiet and respectful. I have most conclusive evidence of the good done by these services. I know that many people who were afraid to enter a Unitarian Chapel, yet felt free to stand there with the crowd, and listen to what we had to say in defence of our principles. Mr. Sharman, in the close of his speech, referred to the prospects of success in Dundee.

The meeting was also addressed by the Revs. J. P. Hopps, A. Gordon, R. B. Drummond, and J. C. Street. A very interesting

part of the proceedings was the presentation of an affectionate address from the members of Mr. Crosskey's Congregation, and other friends, accompanied by a purse of 400 sovereigns, to which Mr. Crosskey made an eloquent and very touching reply; and also to Mrs. Crosskey a silver salver in memory of the occasion, and in token of the esteem and affectionate regard in which she is held. After thanks to the Chairman, a hymn was sung, and Mr. Crosskey pronounced the benediction.

UNITARIAN CHURCH, STRANGEWAYS, MANCHESTER.

On Friday, November 4, a soiree was held in the School-room of this church, to welcome the Rev. Brooke Herford as pastor of the church, which is in future to be supported entirely by voluntary offerings collected at each service. Between three and four hundred persons were present, among them the principal ministers of the Unitarian denomination in Manchester and the neighbourhood, with several from a distance. Alderman Grundy presided. The proceedings were commenced by the singing of a hymn written for the occasion, after which the chairmen dwelt on the qualifications of the new pastor, which in his mind eminently fitted him for the post he had undertaken. He spoke also of the congregation and the spirit of inquiry and the active zeal to which they had been trained under their late minister, to whom they felt themselves under many obligations. Mr. Henry Rawson gave an outline of the history of the congregation during the pastorate of the Rev. Dr. Beard, which extended over thirty-nine years—and dwelt on the plan of a Free Church which they were now inaugurating, and of the success of which he was very hopeful. In the name of the Congregation, he gave Mr. Herford an affectionate and unanimous welcome. Mr. F. Curren read an address of welcome from the superintendents and teachers of the School, and the Rev. W. Gaskell, on the part of the neighbouring ministers, congratulated Mr. Herford on the work he had undertaken, and trusted he might live to see it growing and prospering in his hands.

Mr. Herford rose, and, after some introductory remarks, said—I have been told that it would be expected to-night that I should say a few words about some of the reasons which have caused me to place so great a stress upon this plan of a free and open Church. It has simply come of what I have kept experiencing ever since I have been a minister. In Sheffield I found myself among a race of sturdy men—hard like the steel they handle—but who, like that also, when you *can* work them up into Christians, are a very sterling article, and I desired to bring them into the Christian Church; but one thing that I have felt continually crippling me has been that plan of our places of worship being given up to what I may call proprietary worship, those who support them making all arrangements for their own comfort and convenience. I have no doubt there are few ministers who have not felt something of the same disadvantages. One of the results is that the power of accommodation is so diminished by this plan of special reserved places. A little while ago, in one of our towns, where there is a

most beautiful Gothic Chapel, a friend said to me, "We are thinking of putting up a gallery, because we have so many wanting additional sittings." "What," said I, "and are you going to spoil your beautiful Chapel, on the ground of not having room enough?" Why, at that place there is never a service at which they could not accommodate a hundred or two more, but for the reserved seats. The way it acts is this: You have a Chapel that will seat, say 600 people. As soon as 500 people have joined it, it is full, that is to say, there are no more sittings to let, no more members can be received, because every family will want rather more sittings than their exact number. Now, how many of the 500 will attend upon an average? Never probably more than 300 at any single time, so that you see you have a place that would accommodate 600, called full, and are obliged to talk about additional room, when no more than 300 are ever present. Now that seems to me to be a great loss. By throwing the Chapel open you as good as make it twice as large. That is one way in which the question has come before me. Take another way, with regard to the sociality of worship. Meeting together as worshippers of one form of faith,—a faith, too, which cuts us off from the fellowship of all Churches,—I do think we ought to be, as it were, one brotherhood. I feel that those with whom we worship should no longer be as strangers, but as fellow members in the house of God. Again, I have seen the evil effects of it in another way. Bad times have come, and then some have had to give up their pews, because they could not afford to pay the pew rent. They could have given some small sum weekly, but they dare not undertake a fixed quarterly payment. I have said to them—"Come, we have plenty of room; our Chapel will hold 800, and at night we have never more than 200." But it was no use; they could not bear to sit here and there as casual attenders, so long as the rest of the people had their own places. Mr. Herford also dwelt on the awkwardness which strangers feel in coming into a Chapel where the pews are the property of individuals. He expressed his hopefulness in the plan they had adopted, and asked the Congregation to join him heartily in working it out.

The meeting was also addressed by Revs. J. H. Thom and P. W. Clayden, and Mr. Herford pronounced the benediction.

OBITUARY.

On November 7, at Abbey-Hill, Whitehouse, John Curell, Esq., J.P., aged 80 years.

On November 15, at Farm-Hill, Holywood, Mary, wife of Alexander Mitchell Esq., C.E.

On November 21, at his residence, East Street, Newtownards, Mr. Richard Dobbin, aged 84 years.

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A PLEA FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

IN examining the ministry of the Saviour, we must be impressed with the gentleness of his character, the meekness of his spirit, the persuasiveness of his teaching, and the entire absence of every thing approaching to violence or harshness. How consistent with the whole tenor of his life is that part of the Sermon on the Mount, in which he says—"Judge not that ye be not judged." Even he who knew what was in man, and who might, therefore, without presumption have condemned, seems to have been careful to indulge no such spirit. If he said, "He that believeth shall be saved," his meaning is plain enough; he that receives him, and imbibes his spirit, and obeys his word, shall be saved; for are not such faith and obedience the very qualifications that fit us for the company of the good on earth, and therefore the very requisites that prepare us for the society of the blessed in heaven? And if he said, "He that believeth not shall be damned," he makes no reference, we conceive, to that hell of fire and brimstone burning throughout eternity, which is part of the faith of children and fanatics; but he teaches that those who do not receive his spirit and obey his word, who harbour vile passions, and commit unrighteous acts, are condemned, and excluded from the bliss to which the holy and the good are admitted.

The same forbearance which is exhibited in the ministry of our blessed Lord, we find inculcated by his apostles. Paul, expostulating with those who had shown a censorious spirit, says—"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye. . . . Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth

or falleth." Here it is suggested that the disciples are all the servants not of one another, but of Christ—"One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren;" or perhaps that God is their master; but at any rate, that they are all fellow-servants, no matter how diverse their views and their endowments, and that none had authority over the others. It seems strange that a principle so reasonable and just in itself, and so plainly taught in the Gospel, should have been so soon forgotten, and so generally violated. What but this unchristian spirit of judging and condemning, has been the source,—we do not say of controversy, for controversy carried on in the right spirit is not to be discouraged,—but of the revilings and persecutions, the excommunications and cruel wars that form so prominent a part of the Church's history? First this intolerance sprung up in the bosom of the Church, and was practised by the believer towards his fellow-believer, and when, according to the prediction of our Lord, that which was at first but as "a little leaven" spread and operated on society, and brought under its influence the mass of the population in a country, the same spirit was exhibited towards Jews and heathens, and the most violent persecution was indulged against those who would not outwardly conform to the Christian faith. Nothing could have been more opposed to the spirit of our Lord, and the injunctions of his apostles. To those who did not accept the Gospel, and who had no faith in the Christ whom the apostles preached,—to those who were not "weak in the faith," but who had no faith in Revelation at all,—they could not address Paul's words, "Him that is weak in spirit receive ye;" but even over the utterly unbelieving they could claim no right, from the conduct of our Lord or that of his most enlightened followers, either to exercise authority or practise cruelty.

Christians have no right to condemn their fellow-Christians; all are represented as children of one household, servants of one Master. If in a family the elder or the stronger children tyrannize over the younger or the weaker, there soon spring up bitterness and rebellion, and the peace of the home is destroyed. If servants wield authority over their fellow-servants, there will be

resistance and strife. And so with Christians; we may be bound to one another by many relations, as those of masters and servants, employers and employed, parents and children; but in the exercise of our mental faculties, and in the cultivation of the religious life, we have but one Master, even Christ—but one Father, even God. It may be said that the law and public opinion in various countries have given men such authority over their fellow-men. Perhaps so; but if they have, they have given them what they had no right to give. The law that gives such power is unjust; the creed that embodies it is unchristian; and the public opinion that sanctions it is unsound and opposed to the Gospel of Christ.

But farther, Christians have no power to judge their fellow-Christians. A moment's reflection may show us how uncertain and changeable mere opinions are. They depend on many circumstances over which we have little control, as education, rank, companions, and the extent of our knowledge. Opinions that were at one time endorsed as true by the Church generally, have now been almost universally abandoned; and articles that were once the faithful expression of the leading doctrines of the Church are now felt to be painfully stringent; and many are constrained either to burst through them, and become dissenters, or to practise the Jesuit's art in order still, with a show of reason, to give their allegiance to them. See again how the rank in which a man moves moulds and modifies his religious views, and how many change their opinions as they become richer, and rise into another stratum of the social system. Consider, too, how early training influences opinion. Hence the keen and watchful spirit that is alive in all denominations respecting the religious education of the young, and the efforts that are made by so many to guard the children of their own communion, and bring under their training as many children as they can of other communions. Opinions depend much on education, and the multitude believe as they do, simply because their parents believed so. It is not so with knowledge that is attainable by the senses, nor with that which is capable of demonstration. There is no danger of children growing up to believe that the grass is not green or that the sun is not bright,

no matter by whom they may be educated; and there is no danger of a student learning to believe that the three angles of a triangle are more or less than two right angles, whether he studies at Rome, Geneva, or Oxford. Men should express their opinions on religious matters with modesty; perhaps they would be less popular if they did, but they would certainly show more of a Christian spirit. One thing is plain, that when a man, whether he wear the triple crown, the bishop's lawn, the parson's surplice, or the Geneva gown, declares that his fellow-men, because they do not hold a certain creed, cannot be saved, he is exceeding his province, and proving himself not a disciple, but a dogmatist. It rests with God only, or with him to whom God has committed all judgment, to determine who shall be saved, and who not: and who would not more trustingly commit his future to a merciful Father, or a loving and compassionate Saviour, than to some of his fellow-men, who, with the utmost confidence, consign so many of their brethren, heathen and Christian, to endless agonies in hell?

Are we then to understand that the various parties in Christendom should sink their differences and merge into one common body? So it was in the primitive Church. There were differences, but all were animated by a faith in the living Saviour, which attracted and cemented them. Such a union and co-operation, however, are at present impossible. Those who place foremost in their creed an infallible pope and council of cardinals cannot consent to sink that point in order to unite with their Protestant brethren. Those who make faith in the Deity of a crucified Saviour necessary to salvation cannot unite with those who maintain that Scripture teaches no such irrational doctrine. And still more, those who have faith in a divine Revelation and a divinely-commissioned Saviour, cannot, for sake of peace and a formal union, lower that standard, and co-operate for the spread of religious truth with those who place the Scriptures on a level with the Vedas and Koran,* and regard our blessed Lord as nothing more, in the nature of his mission and gifts, than a Milton or a Howard. When prin-

* Such a view of the Scriptures is advocated in a leading article of *The London Inquirer* of December 3.

ciples are so entirely opposed, union is impossible; and those who, by plausible arguments and appeals to a false charity, advocate it, seem to us to recommend the sacrifice of precious and saving truth to a fashionable and spurious liberality. But where union is impossible, forbearance and charity are right and practicable; and men should cherish what they receive as the truth in love, and not bite and devour their neighbours, whether fellow-Christians or fellow-men.

PASSAGES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT ILLUSTRATED BY REFERENCE TO A HEBREW IDIOM.

It has often been remarked that the writers of the New Testament, being all of them Jews by birth and familiar with the style of the Old Testament, have often expressed themselves in the Hebrew idiom, even when it differs widely from that of the Greek language in which they wrote; and that, at times, their words would be unintelligible, unless explained by reference to the usages of oriental speech. This point is now so generally admitted by divines and scholars, that it is needless either to produce authorities in its support, or examples in illustration. I proceed, therefore, at once to specify an idiom which is quite common in Hebrew, and of which several examples occur in the New Testament, but which has not hitherto been sufficiently noticed by commentators on the latter portion of the sacred volume.

The idiom to which I refer is known to grammarians as the *indefinite use of the 3rd person singular masculine* of the active verb. This usage is quite unknown to that family of languages to which the Greek, Latin and English belong. When we have occasion to state that a fact takes place or has taken place, without mentioning any particular person as the doer of it, we commonly do so by putting the verb in the passive voice. Thus we say, "*It is reported* that the Emperor of the French is sick." Sometimes we put the verb in the active voice, and the third person plural, as, "*They say* that the Queen

will open the parliament in person." Both these forms are used as familiarly in Greek as in English. The French have an indefinite pronoun—"*on*" for this especial use: as "*On dit*," (*one says, or people say;* but better rendered *it is said.*) The Germans use the word "*man*" as the subject of the verb, in such sentences as "*Man glaubt*," (*one believes;* better translated, *it is believed.*) But the Hebrew idiom often puts the verb, in such cases, in the 3rd sing. mas. and in the active voice, without any subject expressed; the very same form that is, in other contexts, rendered by the verb with the pronoun "*he*" prefixed. I shall produce only two examples of this idiom. The first is taken from Num. xxxv. 25, "And the congregation shall deliver the slayer out of the hand of the avenger of blood; and the congregation shall restore him to the city of his refuge, whither he was fled; and he shall abide in it unto the death of the high-priest, WHOM HE ANOINTED with the holy oil." Such is the literal (or rather the *servile*) translation; but it is absurd, for it makes the *casual man-slayer* to be the person who was to *consecrate the high-priest!* Our translators have, therefore, properly turned the verb, in the last clause, into the passive,—"The high-priest WHO WAS ANOINTED with the holy oil." Another instance is taken from Gen. ii. 20, "But for Adam HE DID NOT FIND an help meet for him." Here again our translators have properly turned the verb into the passive, "but for Adam THERE WAS NOT FOUND an help," &c. Very numerous are the examples of this idiom, occurring in the Hebrew Scriptures.

And although the New Testament is written in Greek, there are not a few passages in which the same phraseology is employed. The sacred writers transferred their thoughts literally from the oriental language to which they were accustomed, and naturally fell into the same idioms that existed in their native speech; but our translators have not always (if ever) noticed the occurrence of this particular Hebraism, or else they have not thought it needful to depart from the verbal rendering of the original. In some instances they have thought it necessary to supply a noun as the subject for the verb, in italic type. Of this we have an instance in 1 Cor. xvi. 2, of

which the verbal rendering would be—"Let every one of you lay by him in store, as HE HATH PROSPERED him." But there is no one mentioned to whom the pronoun *he* can be referred; the translators have, therefore, supplied the word *God* in italics, "as *God* hath prospered him." I conceive that this is needless; the proper rendering is, "as HE HATH BEEN prospered."

In John x. 34, 35, we have a clear example of this usage. "Jesus answered them, 'Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are Gods? If HE CALLED them Gods unto whom,'" &c., "*He called them Gods.*" Who called them by this name? No one is mentioned; and in fact there was no occasion to mention any particular person, for no particular person is intended to be expressed. The sense is, "If THEY WERE CALLED Gods," &c. A still more conspicuous example is found in the same Gospel, xii. 40—"Because that Esaias said again, HE HATH BLINDED their eyes and HARDENED their heart." But the Apostle's meaning is not fairly brought out by this rendering, which in fact can scarcely be said to have any meaning at all; for it gives us a pronoun without any substantive to which it can refer. The true sense is, "Because that Esaias said again, THEIR EYES HAVE BEEN BLINDED and THEIR HEART HATH BEEN HARDENED."

It is surprising on how many passages of the New Testament the observation of this idiom throws light, where, for want of attention to it, there is obscurity and confusion. For an example of this, turn to 1 Cor. xiv. 5; "Greater is he that prophesieth [*preacheth*] than he that speaketh with tongues, EXCEPT HE INTERPRET, that the church may receive edifying." In the first of these clauses, (as indeed throughout this whole chapter), "the prophet" (that is, *the preacher*) is broadly distinguished from the person "that speaketh with tongues;" and clearly the interpretation of what is uttered in an unknown tongue is included in the function of the *preacher*, who speaks to the edification of the brethren. But in the second clause, the two offices would seem to be united in the same person. "Greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, EXCEPT HE INTERPRET." I am of opinion that this is an erroneous rendering, and that the Apostle's words ought to be translated, "EXCEPT

ONE INTERPRET," or "except it be interpreted." And in the same way I would translate the 13th verse of the same chapter, "Let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray," (not *that he may interpret*," as in our English version, but) "that SOME ONE MAY INTERPRET," or that "it may be interpreted."

The expression, "*he saith*," occurs dozens of times in the New Testament (especially in the Epistles, and most frequently in that to the Hebrews) in connexions where it either gives no sense or a wrong one, but where all would read smoothly and intelligibly if it were rendered, as it ought to be, "*it is said*." An example of this usage, together with other illustrations of the idiom under consideration, is found in 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26, 27; for the sake of brevity I here render those verses as I conceive they ought to be rendered, leaving it to the reader to compare my translation with that in the English version. "For he must reign till *all enemies are put* under his feet. The last enemy shall be destroyed, [even] death; for *all things are put* under his feet. Yet when *it is said* that all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted who did put all things under him," &c. Our common version by saying, "*he saith*," in verse 27, makes the Son to be the person who used the phrase on which St. Paul comments; but such was not the fact, and certainly the Apostle never intended to assert it.

There are two remarkable passages in the Gospels which, for want of attention to this Hebraism, have been generally misunderstood. I refer to the account of our Saviour's baptism, in Matt. iii. 16, and the parallel verse in Mark i. 10. I take it as it stands in the former Gospel. "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and HE SAW the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him." *Who saw this?* The construction would seem to imply that it was Jesus himself; but how could a fact which was visible to none but the Saviour himself be an attestation to others of his divine commission and authority? Hence many critics have thought that John the Baptist is the person who is declared to have seen the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Christ. Undoubtedly he did so; (see John i. 32); but

the construction does not allow us to suppose that he is individually referred to in Matthew or Mark as the person who said it. For my own part, I have not the slightest doubt upon my mind that we ought to translate the clause as follows: "And the heavens were opened above him, and the SPIRIT OF GOD WAS SEEN descending like a dove, and alighting upon him." On reference to Luke iii. 21, 22, it will be seen that such is the meaning which that Evangelist attached to these expressions in the writings of his predecessors.

The last example to which I shall refer is 1 Pet. iii. 19,—"For Christ also suffered. . . . . being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit;" (that is to say, *being brought to life by the special power of God*;) "by which, also, HE WENT and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient," &c. Here the context shews that "the spirits in prison," are the men of the antediluvian world. But how did Christ go to preach to them? The Roman Catholics tell us that he went down to purgatory, preached to them there, converted them, and delivered them out of its pains. But if there be such a place, were there none in it but the souls of the sinners who lived before the flood? Or if there were others there, why did Christ preach to the antediluvians alone? Besides, the whole passage shews that the preaching here spoken of took place before the deluge, and was instrumental in saving eight persons from perishing in it. Others may, perhaps, believe that there was an incarnation of Christ prior to his birth in Bethlehem, prior even to the flood; and that, during its continuance, he went and preached to the men of the ancient world. That is a fact, however, which would be too important, if true, not to have been mentioned or alluded to in some other passage of the New Testament, or the Old. There is no necessity for having recourse to either hypothesis, if the verse be rendered, as in my opinion it ought to be, "by which, also, ONE WENT and preached," &c., that is to say, by the spirit of God, (a special dispensation of his power and grace,) a preacher, (Noah,) was sent to the sinful race before the flood, to warn them of their evil way, and beseech them to repent.

These criticisms, so far as I know, have not been applied to the interpretation of the New Testament; but, in my opinion, they are well founded, and ought to be borne in mind by translators and expositors of Scripture.

A STUDENT.

FINISH THY WORK

FINISH thy work, the time is short;
The sun is in the west;
The night is coming down—till then
Think not of rest.

Yes, finish all thy work, *then* rest;
Till then rest never;
The rest prepared for thee by God
Is rest for ever.

Finish thy work, then wipe thy brow,
Ungird thee from thy toil;
Take breath, and from each weary limb
Shake off the soil.

Finish thy work, then sit thee down
On some celestial hill,
And of its strength-reviving air,
Take thou thy fill.

Finish thy work, then go in peace;
Life's battle fought and won;
Hear from the throne the Master's voice,
"Well done, well done!"

Finish thy work, then take thy harp,
Give praise to God above;
Sing a new song of mighty joy
And endless love.

Give thanks to him who held thee up
In all thy path below,
Who made thee faithful unto death,
And crowns thee now.

LEAVES FROM A MISSIONARY'S DIARY.—No. III.

I HAVE no faith in death-bed repentance. I do not much believe in the efficacy of death-bed scenes, and am conscious that I have no skill in depicting them, so as to leave impressions on the minds of others. In truth, I possess little taste for the sensational on any topic. Still I am aware that a simple narrative of the departure of an inhabitant of the earth, for the undiscovered country, for the land where this mortal must put on immortality, may be made profitable, and interesting also to those who are yet called upon to be up and doing, warning them of the instability of all temporal things, and that the time must come—may very soon come—when the world, so far as they are concerned, shall be for ever at an end. Now, I have been called to the bedsides of a number of dying persons, those of every age, the very old and the very young, the strong man cast down in the fulness of his strength, and to him whose whole life has been little better than a long disease, to the couch of the sinner and of the comparative saint, and in every case the Word of God has been found the reprover or the solace, in all cases the rock on which a rational and vigorous faith could be founded, and in many that which enabled the dying to overcome the world, and to joy in the God of their salvation. Take away the Gospel of Christ, and we must be poor and naked, blind human guides, and all connected with us miserable. It is related of Sir Walter Scott, than when on his death-bed, his son-in-law, Lockhart, asked him what book should he read to soothe him, Scott replied with somewhat of his former energy, "Can you ask? there is but one book now." Mr. Lockhart then read to him the fourteenth chapter of John's Gospel, to which Scott listened with the deepest attention. And this fourteenth chapter—how often have I read it to the sick, the suffering, the weak in body and depressed in mind, and never, I firmly believe, without, for the time at least, a comforting effect; the "peace I leave with you," has thus descended on the humble believer, causing his heart not to be troubled, bidding his soul not to be afraid.

And though I have never gone about to carry a sectarian gospel, I was most commonly recognised as

a Unitarian preacher. The chapter I have just mentioned reminds me of a passage in my ministry,—calling on a young man who had been a Sunday School teacher in one of our large congregations, and who had maintained a steady reputable character, I found him sinking under disease with little prospect of recovery. We entered, in the presence of his widowed mother, into conversation suited to the circumstances of his case; ending, as customary, with reading and prayer. I selected the chapter in question, and at the close he looked with a faint smile towards his parent, who was of the orthodox persuasion, saying—"There mother, I have always told you so,—we Unitarians do believe in Christ." The old lady nodded assent, and it is to be hoped was cured of the prejudice, so rife and so dearly cherished among so many persons of all ranks, that we reject Jesus as a Saviour, because we reject the unscriptural doctrine of the deity of his person. May our belief in the divinity of his mission—which is quite a different thing—be ever in us, and abound more and more, so that it may be the anchor of the soul to the end.

I have frequently been accosted in the street, and urged at once to enter houses, with the inmates of which I had no previous intercourse, and in all such cases have complied. Once, in the case of a man very ill, the patient asked me if I were a clergyman, meaning a minister of the Church of England. On my replying in the negative, still that I was willing to minister to his spiritual wants, he told me he had no need of my services, he did not believe I could do him any good. It is but fair to mention, that such instances of exclusiveness were most rare. In nearly every one my presence was but too welcome to ask any questions concerning my creed or church, whilst, as a matter of course, I never entered into such distinctions. I find a memorandum, that, passing through a certain street, I was asked to come in and pray with a dying woman. She was young, and had not long been married, and seldom had I witnessed a scene so affecting, for there seemed to be a strong sense of religion in the family. Fond attachment was between the husband and his poor suffering partner, yet there was resignation to the will of Him who doeth all things well. The

Scripture I read and the brief prayer I uttered were responded to by the sobs of the husband, the mother, and friends. I believe the woman died very soon after my departure, but there was hope as regarded herself, and the survivors were not left comfortless, remembering that "he who believeth on me shall never die."

In large towns the temptations to sin are very numerous, and this especially is the case in factories, where numbers are gathered together, and where the spirit of emulation is as great in vice as in anything that is good. Many are corrupted by the company they keep, indeed are compelled to keep, for choice is usually out of the question; they are led astray, and they fall, sometimes deplorably, fatally so. A boy or girl goes in quite young, with no good habits formed, at the same time grossly ignorant and with the moral principle totally undeveloped; hence, in the case of females, so many fall a prey to the seducer, tempted by the love of finery, of some paltry distinction of dress or ornament, whilst the boys are often induced to take what is not their own, to purloin from their master goods or money. The parents suffer much on this account, the whole of their lives is poisoned by these juvenile delinquencies, which entail heavy punishment and disgrace. What anxious solicitude, what tremblings, what sobbings, and outcries, and faintings, have I witnessed in the Sessions court during the trials and on sentence being pronounced; the poor creature on his knees begging the mercy of the court, the agonized mother led out in a stupor by the father, he striving to maintain, though poorly, some composure. A water-carrier, one of those men who earn a hard living by one of the hardest of all employments, spoke to me of his son, then in jail awaiting his trial. The lad, in a letter he had written to his friends, protested his innocence of the alleged crime,—robbing his employer. The man knew not what to do; he was too poor to employ counsel; but no counsel would have availed, for the boy was convicted on clear evidence, and was, I believe, transported. Evil communications had done the mischief here. Bad company had led him astray. Of his subsequent career I am entirely ignorant.

Truly, also, may it be said that the people perish for

lack of knowledge,—not of that elementary and merely superficial knowledge, which it is the boast of our age is widely disseminated, but of real, substantial knowledge—the knowledge of duty, of one's self, of why we were sent into the world, of our responsibilities, and of what the consequences will be of neglect or perversion of time and opportunity, of the talents which are more or less intrusted to all. This kind of knowledge is greatly unknown, and its vital importance is with numbers quite disregarded. With such persons education means nothing more than the ability to read, to write, to cipher, in however imperfect a manner; and because they care not to send their children to a daily school, they rely on the miserable teaching of a Sunday School for the purpose of learning these branches of instruction; and we repeat, miserable teaching, for in whatever Sunday School writing and ciphering form parts of tuition, everything is sacrificed to them, and religious instruction is thrown into the back ground; whilst it cannot for a moment be supposed that either writing or the casting of accounts can be taught in any way satisfactorily once a week, even were the teachers, which in general they are not, accomplished penmen and arithmeticians. Hence it is that so many, leaving the Sunday School, leave behind them everything of religious principle. They have finished their education; what more would you have them think of, or do? And this ignorance of all that is pure and lovely and of good report is most lamentable, and it constitutes a very serious stumbling-block in our path, the more so because it is not sheer downright ignorance. There is a muddy kind of knowledge, which causes great conceit in the possessor. He is sure he knows all that is necessary, sure that you have no right to ask him to acquire more; he is quite content to be as he is, has no doubt he shall do well enough, cannot see any good in all this religion, nay thinks, perhaps says, all religion is cant and nonsense, only it is your trade and you must preach to others or you could not live. Through this sevenfold shield of ignorance and assurance your arrows will seldom penetrate, and hence many pass their lives in a low, sensual, degraded state, stopping their ears and closing their eyes. Hence they oppose and resent every attempt

to bring them under higher and more spiritual influences; and too much do they become, as those of old, without hope and without God in the world. Still, I have met with persons apparently in the depths of this kind of indifference, who, by patience and perseverance, have been induced to come and cast in their lot with us, have regularly attended ordinances, and have walked, so far as could be discovered, humbly with God. Yet of the generality of such persons it may well be said, that being wise in their own conceit, there is more hope of a fool than of them.

There are some, indeed very many, to be met with in the course of daily visitation, to whom nothing can be done in a moral way, and from whom nothing can be expected till the wants of the body are supplied. We must not ask, how came you into this state? or, have your follies brought you to it? but, how can you be relieved? Numerous have been the cases of this kind which have come within my knowledge, and these occasionally of the most fearful kind. Thus, "— Poor widow, still in the lowest destitution. The room (which serves for all purposes) was, when I entered it, literally without furniture, save a little straw in one corner thinly covered, and a single crazy chair. A daughter, ill of rheumatic fever, has since been removed to this apartment. Her mother had contrived to borrow a bedstead, with an apology for a bed, but bedding was wanted, and I was indebted to a kind friend, who, on my representation, sent some large coarse wrappers which, whilst they comfortably covered the bed, were not tempting enough to be seized for rent. Most gratefully was the gift received." This was by no means a solitary instance of the extremest privation, nay of unmitigated desolation, whilst my Belfast friends may see that the distress which reigns in even their favoured town has its counterpart elsewhere,—an empty cupboard, an empty grate, not a table, and scarcely a seat, the bed, if it deserve the name, fit only for the pig-sty. How true is the old adage, how full of bitter experience, that "one half of the world knows not how the other half lives." Would that it cared. Old Lear, in the season of his calamity, could remember those whose "houseless heads and unfed sides, whose looped and windowed

raggedness" were left to "bide the pelting of the pitiless storm," and then lamented that he had "taken little care of this." And so should others lament, who feed well and who lie softly. So should they yet think of their forsaken brethren, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared.

"The sin of great cities" is a startling yet too well understood phrase. Nothing perplexes the philanthropist more sorely than to know how to subdue it, how in any way to meet it. To every attempt at remedy hitherto applied well founded and serious objections lie. Domiciliary visitation on the one hand, the midnight meetings on the other, have each and all failed of success. They cannot go to the root of the evil. One thing seems certain, that if the missionary wishes to do any good in this direction by visiting, he must not, unless under peculiar circumstances, go alone. I always acted on this maxim, and as no one of my friends ever cared to go with me on such an expedition, I have very little to say of good done in this way. Still, I have it recorded that a very poor woman, applying to me for relief, her case, on being investigated, presented circumstances of great misery. She had been a strolling actress, and had, I fear, led an irregular life. She was now not half clothed, more than half famished, and nearly shelterless. A poor woman had given her temporary lodgings, and shared her provisions with her. But this could not last. I gave her something for present support, and recommended her to the officials of the workhouse, that she might be passed home. She sent me from the house an affecting note, desiring to be remembered in my prayers. I can also remember being called into a court of no good reputation, and into a house there of the same character, of course, to perform some of the last offices of religion to a poor dying female. The people were very civil and subdued in manner. The woman was in the last stage of illness, apparently thirty years of age, emaciated and haggard, and nearly insensible. I could do little here, but commend the soul of one who had fallen and greatly sinned to the infinite mercy of him who knows human frailty, and can make allowance for the force of temptation,—the sin we must hold in abhorrence, but the sinner is ever an object of compas-

sion. My voice was at times drowned by noises beneath the window; brawls, curses, or the laughter which is madness. How seldom is the "still small voice" suffered to be heard amid scenes like this.

And though not directly connected with the things to which allusion has just been made, the case of a family wherein the grossest ignorance of spiritual matters prevailed deserves to be noticed. Frequent calls had been made at this house, without, as it might seem, any impression being effected. One day I was sent for in all haste; the mother, who had for some time been in a dying condition, was anxious to see me. Conversing with her on the state of her mind, she acknowledged complete ignorance of anything future. She said, "I am no scholar, I have never been taught good things, I should like to hear good books read, but no one takes that trouble with me." She felt that no one cared for her soul. He who should have been her protector and guide could read a little, but he was a heartless sot. I got him to kneel with me at the bed-side, and would willingly hope his heart was touched for the time. His poor wife heard me with fond attention, as listening to something quite new, and very strange. Is there not fault somewhere that the Gospel of glad tidings is strange news yet to so many?

But I must tear myself from a subject which grows on the hands, and on which I might dilate at far greater length than the Editor's space will permit, or than the reader's patience would tolerate. If, in the foregoing reminiscences and remarks, I have been so fortunate as to interest any friends of Domestic Missions, or to have awakened any feelings on their behalf in the minds of others, who have hitherto looked coldly on them, I shall be well rewarded for anything I have now written. I have, at any rate, done what I could; let each do what he can—all he can—serving his generation faithfully till he fall asleep to rise to eternal life.

B.

STRICTURES ON "THE MIRACLE QUESTION."

[We were unable to insert the following communication in our last number. It has reference to a recent article in the leading English Unitarian Journal, and, in our mind, ably exposes the loose mode of writing now so fashionable on the subject of Revealed Religion.—Ed. Ch. Un.]

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN UNITARIAN.

Sir,—If your attention has been directed to the leading article in *The Inquirer* of October 29, you must have been forcibly struck by some of its distinguishing properties. It is often unintelligible in its language; it is confused in thought; it abounds in tautology, inconsistency, and inconclusive reasoning.

It begins with the profound observation, that it has been recently and wisely said, that the time has arrived for the temperate discussion of the Miracle Question. This is put forward as a wise and recent discovery; but we should like to know, when was there ever a time unfit for the *temperate* discussion of this or any other important question? After intimating his own claim to the possession of "a large-hearted, devout, and fearless, though moderate spirit" (to some of which qualifications, at least, we must demur), he proceeds to say, "Believing, as we profoundly do, that Christianity is a spirit and a life independent of all speculation, resting on the immovable truth of things, and accordant with all wisdom and knowledge, we have not the slightest dread of serious injury from any opinions regarding the reality of the Gospel Miracles."

It would require more room than you could afford me to evolve all the absurdities of this passage. As a sample, we may observe, that to say of an undefined, abstract term, "Christianity," that it is a life and a spirit, is downright nonsense. It is perfectly true, and it is our ground of confidence, that the truths of the Christian Religion are an invaluable source of living strength, and of spiritual energy. It is a leading objection to this "modern school of *thought*" (a sad misnomer), that it deprives the Christian religion of all those principles and

convictions that animated and fortified the Apostles and their followers in the prosecution of the great work which their Lord and Master sent them to do, by impugning the sincerity and veracity of Christ, and the reality of that resurrection which they put forward as the foundation of their whole building. But, further, this "life and spirit" is independent of all "speculation." What does he mean by speculation? There are various subjects of speculalation in all branches of philosophy, and we may speculate about many unrevealed propositions concerning the spiritual world, and so forth; but the ground of our confidence is not a matter of speculation, but a matter of fact, that God sent his Son into the world that the world through him might be saved. This Christianity is "to rest on the immovable truth of things." What things? I cannot conceive what he means, except it be the existence of God; but I think he would hardly call the existence of God "a thing." And what is his distinction of an *immovable* truth from a movable truth? All truths, I conceive, are immovable, for if ever they are moved they are no longer truths. The truths of the Christian religion, and more especially that great truth of the victory over death by the resurrection of our Lord, are immovable, and were vouchsafed in order that we might be steadfast and immovable; but surely this purpose cannot be answered by the "modern" notion of its being a matter of indifference whether we believe in any miracle, and therefore in the resurrection or not; nor can it be readily conceived how such a state of things is "accordant with all wisdom and knowledge." We hope and believe that it is very far from being the prevalent opinion of our Unitarian brethren, that it is only by eliminating from the Gospel whatever is miraculous or supernatural, as being on this account indifferent, that we can arrive at what is accordant with all wisdom and knowledge. This indifference is insisted on in several places, and is implied in what closely follows, viz., "whether the miracles are historically true, and an integral portion of the Gospels, or whether they are only the imaginative product of an early age, must, in a Free Church like ours, be an "open question." And in this passage we may further note the very original idea, that the miracles of the New Testa-

ment, with all the minute and descriptive particulars of time, place, and person, were an "imaginative product" of an early age, *i.e.*, the invention of persons totally unacquainted with the localities, &c., that so unmistakeably corroborate the facts. I may observe, too, that this "indifference" as to the authenticity or the early age of the historical miracles, must be, at the same time, an indifference as to the authenticity of St. Paul's epistles; for his reference to this miraculous history is frequent and undeniable.

Then follows the wise aphorism, "Ten times more important than the most unfaltering faith in the supernatural is a simple love of truth, and a humble-minded deference to earnest conviction, no matter how opposed to our own." Without involving ourselves in this arithmetical problem, I may ask whether he means that a simple love of truth is incompatible with an unfaltering faith in the supernatural. If these can co-exist, what occasion is there for his arithmetical computation; if not, he must renounce his own simple love of truth, because he says that he never "impugned the Gospel miracles," but considers them as "bound up in the revelation of truth and duty given to the world by Christ." He values them as "illustrations of the life of Christ" (how?), but has never been able "to give them that *evidential* value that is claimed for them." In other words, the miracles are not evidences of the mission and authority of Christ, notwithstanding Peter's declaration, that it was by miracles and signs and wonders which God did by Jesus in the midst of them that he was proved to be of God.

"The historically supernatural (he says) is an adjunct of the Gospels, but we cannot regard it an essential constituent thereof." Now, if the historically supernatural (by which, I presume, he means the supernatural events recorded in the Gospels) be false, it can be no adjunct of the Gospels whatever; and if the same be true, these events are unquestionably constituents of the Gospels, call them essential or not as you please. They are true, and therefore to be believed, and this is all that is required.

The following is a choice specimen of eloquence and argument:—"We are living every hour amid evidence of the Divine presence and love unspeakably more impres-

sive than anything written in a book." [What a powerful argument to dissuade any author from writing on this subject, or any reader from perusing any books already written upon it.] Then follows the eloquent passage—"The apples hanging on the trees at this autumn season,—the changes, functions, and uses of vegetable life, or the mysteries of our own bodily or mental organisation: how we are sustained from day to day, and the provision made for the perpetuation, education, and happiness of the race; these to a religious mind are ever-speaking indications of God. These are facts not to be gainsaid, nor subject to the misgivings or qualifications which attach to all ancient traditions. Has the reader ever thought of the light, that pure element that bathes our world, how wonderfully it works, and how much he owes to it? If so, he has a miracle grand and striking enough to occupy his thoughts and fill them with God, even though every miracle of the Gospel should be denied." Very rhetorically composed, it is true; but what a lame and impotent conclusion! What a fool St. Paul must have been to have ignored this truth, and to have maintained that though what is known of God was manifest in them, and God had shewed it unto them; though his eternal power and Godhead were to be so clearly seen and easily understood that they were without excuse; yet they had fallen into such a state of wickedness that nothing could recover them short of the *revelation* of the righteousness of God, in that Gospel of Christ which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. But it seems that it is only to the *religious* mind that these indications are to be ever speaking of God. How did it become religious? What is to become of the irreligious or neutral mind, according to this modern phasis of faith? Did the writer never hear or read that it was not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance that Christ came? Does he not know that "though the world was bathed in light,"—though "vegetable life had exhibited its changes, functions, uses," and so forth, from the beginning of the human race,—yet the world had become so darkened, so dead in trespasses and sins, that this gracious supernatural interposition was required for their regeneration?

What are we to think of such assertions as these?—"*God and his Providence existed before the Bible, and there is no truth or doctrine it contains that is not true eternally in the nature of things!*"

So, then, all the facts recorded in the Gospels—even the simple fact of Jesus Christ appearing upon the earth—must be either untrue, or "eternally true in the nature of things." Again, "Christ rose from the dead because there is another life, and resurrection to a heavenly state is a law or appointment of God; but Christ did not originate that appointment more than he did life itself; nor even if the historical facts connected with him were denied, would the fact of God existing from all eternity be in the slightest degree affected."

Surely it is full time for the Christian ministers of the Unitarian persuasion to repudiate such vapid insipidities, such unintelligible abstractions, such hardly-concealed rejection of all that distinguishes the Christian religion from Mahommedanism or Deism, as being the expression of their Christian belief and their Christian hopes.

I had marked some other choice passages, but these will be thought abundantly sufficient to exemplify what it is that this modern school of thought would substitute for the plain truths of the Gospel, as the "basis or essential elements of Revelation suited to the present era of Christian civilisation." CORRESPONDENT.

THE BIBLE IN THE PULPIT.

WE mentioned in a former number, as an evidence of the advance which some Unitarian ministers in England had made, that they saw no good reason why the Bible should be read in the pulpit, rather than other good and more modern books; and in a late number of *The London Inquirer*, a minister, in one of its leading articles, suggests such a view. He says, "It may be wise or unwise to limit the literature selected for lessons before sermon to one book, and that characterised by such marked national peculiarities as the Bible is. For hymns, we sing the poetry of modern authors, and praise God in the language of Cowper, Watts, Doddridge, Wesley, and Montgomery; and it would puzzle the followers of old fashions to tell why, for lessons, we should not sometimes read modern prose." Farther on in the same article we read, "It may shock some provincial intellects to hear it (the Bible) spoken of in

the same breath, and put in the same class, as the Vedas and the Koran, but this is only because they fail to see how mankind includes all nations, and religion is wider than its Jewish and Christian forms. If God has thought fit, as he evidently has, to let the Vedas and the Koran be the only heavenly guides vouchsafed to thousands of millions of his children, it does not become us to spit upon them; and when we prate that classing them with the Bible is irreverent towards our faith, we had better ask whether our faith is not still more irreverent towards God." Referring to passages of Scripture which record miraculous events, he says, "I regard all Old and New Testament miracles as exaggerations of natural events, myths, parables in action, the carnal shape of spiritual ideas, the unconscious play of child-like imaginations, or the conscious creation of theological partisans anxious for arguments to support a favourite theory; but yet when they bear on the subject of my sermon, I am quite willing to read them."

We cannot be suspected of having exaggerated the views of this writer, for we have given them in his own words. He occupies a professedly Christian pulpit, and ministers, we presume, to a professedly Christian congregation; and yet in what sense he is more a Christian than a Mohammedan we are at a loss to understand, or in what sense he can adopt the Scriptures as his rule of faith we cannot imagine. We believe he is a member of an assembly which makes the authority of the Scriptures its fundamental principle; but we have seen too plainly, in the course of the past two or three years, that with some this is only an *ad captandum* motto, a traditionary phrase, which has entirely lost its meaning, and signifies absolutely nothing. He informs us that he reads the Scriptures in the pulpit; but on his own shewing there is no more reason why he should read the authorised version of the New Testament than Sale's translation of the Koran, unless it be to accommodate himself to the prejudices of the people; and when he reads the account of Lazarus being restored to life, or of the resurrection of our Lord, whether he regards these narratives as "myths," or "parables in action," or "the creations of theological partisans," his feelings must be somewhat like those of the Roman augurs, who, for a trade, imposed on the credulity of the multitude.

But does *The Inquirer* endorse these anti-christian views, which it has published in its largest type? No; we think not; for after a lapse of two weeks, and after it had various complaints from its subscribers, it gently takes the writer to task. "With several of our correspondent's remarks," it says, "we entirely disagree. But the press is properly open to him; and wherever an audience is got to hear him, of course he will utter himself in his own way. We only object to the pulpit, whose religious function is well understood, and whose special purpose and use have been reared by the Bible, to the Divine revelation of which it is a prominent witness, being perverted by remarks tending to disparage the Bible. We protest against the very unwise statement that not more than half a dozen psalms are altogether accordant with good taste or poetry, and we object to any representation of the Bible which puts it into the same class as the Vedas and the Koran. . . . If the Bible has its literary side, it also contains, we must remember and

admit, a revelation of the Divine." So far well; and we must thank *The Inquirer*, or rather, perhaps, its protesting subscribers, for a statement so distinct; but when it says, *the Bible contains, we must remember and admit, a revelation of the Divine*, we beg to remind it that this is just what some will not admit, and that it was frequent and virulent in its denunciations against certain Irish ministers, because they required such an admission from candidates for Christian pulpits. Such is the system of "blowing hot and cold" which has been practised by Unitarian journalists, in the vain hope of keeping in one denomination ministers and people whose principles are essentially different, and who hold no views in common except those which are held alike by Christian and Deist.

We may add, as another example of this contradictory teaching, the following extract from the leading article in *The Unitarian Herald* of Dec. 16, entitled "Who is my Master":—"Striking away the accessories, we may say that the Christian's Master is CHRIST. . . . Taken in the large and comprehensive way in which it is presented in the Bible, to own CHRIST as Lord and Master is the central position of the Christian Church." Now to make the owning of Christ as Lord and Master in the way in which it is presented in the Bible, the central position of the Christian Church, excludes all the Parkerites, including one of the Editors of *The Herald* (for by their own admission they have no belief in such a Christ at all), and endorses a principle advocated in these pages, which again and again *The Herald* has stigmatised as bigotry and intolerance.

THE LATE REV. JAMES WORRALL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN UNITARIAN.

SIR,—With reference to a letter signed, "One from Larne," which appeared in your last number, commenting on my notice of the late Rev. James Worrall, I am very sorry to find that what I felt myself constrained to say of that gentleman, in connexion with our Congregational history, has given pain to any of his surviving friends. It has always been my anxious wish and endeavour to walk "circumspectly," as well as "honestly," amongst the tombs of the departed. I thought that I had done so; but your correspondent has taught me that I might have been even more careful than I was. I thank him for the lesson, and shall try to profit by it so long as I live.

With respect, however, to the facts of the case, seeing that they have unfortunately been brought under public notice, I must be allowed still to think that they were as I have represented them to be. Until I am otherwise and better informed on the subject than I am at present—and I shall feel much obliged to any "one from Larne" who will take the trouble of thus informing me—I must continue to believe that the view which I took of Mr. Worrall's conduct here in '98 was *historically* correct. Whether I was also

prudentially correct in publicly expressing that view, is a different question. Perhaps I was not. Perhaps I did not sufficiently consult the feelings of that large class of persons, who, when *their own* departed friends are concerned, think that the proper business of a chronicler is not only to *state* facts where they are favourable, but, (according to the truly heathen morality of your correspondent's maxim—"nothing but good of the dead,") also, to *hide* facts where they are not favourable, and to *make* facts where they are required. Of course, in one sense of the words, my assailant is perfectly justified in saying that I "know" nothing about the matter at issue. In '98 I was not born. In '98, therefore, I cannot have been in Larne to see and "know" what was going on here; but I have heard a good deal from persons who were then living in Larne, and whose means of information on the subject, was, I think, infinitely better than those possessed either by your correspondent or myself; and certainly, if the statements which those persons have made to me respecting some particulars of Mr. Worrall's conduct at that time be correct, my conscience cannot accuse me of having said any thing concerning that conduct which I was not justified in saying. On a subject so painfully delicate as that now under discussion, I do not think that I can be induced *publicly* to go farther than I have now done.

With regard to another matter alluded to by your correspondent, and for which I am solely responsible, I ask leave to add a few words by way of explanation. When I said that "it might have been as well" for Mr. Worrall "if he had never left the Established Church," I did not mean to insinuate that it would have been right for him to continue in a church whose doctrines he did not believe; but only to expresss my apprehension that Mr. Worrall, by loosing his theological barque from its original moorings, had involved himself—as many others,-under similar circumstances, have done before and since—in a sea of troubles, and had brought upon himself the mental misery which, I fear, is the common lot of those who, being "weak in the faith," are received to "doubtful disputations" by persons who, themselves, are "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." And that, in the case of Mr. Worrall, this surmise of mine was neither unnatural nor uncharitable, must appear, I think, from the fact, that on his death his children returned to the Established Church, where they have ever since contentedly remained.

The tone and language of your correspondent, in one or two passages of his letter, might appear to be unnecessarily offensive towards myself. But this, under the circumstances of the case, I can not only overlook but commend. I admire the man who stands up for an absent or dead friend, more especially if that friend has been a relative or connexion; and I trust I shall always take kindly any little punishment which I may be called on to endure at the hands of a person fighting in such a cause, even though the honest rage from which I suffer should be founded—as in the present instance I think it is founded—on a misapprehension of my words and conduct.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

CLASSON PORTER.

LARNE, *December* 14, 1864.

INTELLIGENCE.

MEETING OF AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, December 6th and 7th, an extraordinary meeting of this Association was held, the object of which, as stated in the advertisement, was "to awaken interest in the work of the Association, by laying before the churches the condition of our funds and the demand for our labour." After prayer by the Rev. Dr. Gannett, the President, the Rev. Dr. Stibbens, gave a cordial welcome to those present, and explained the reasons for calling them together. There were renewed demands on the Association for funds, in consequence of the work they had to do. He said that he had been acquainted with the Association for a quarter of a century, and at no time had it so many means of doing good as now. The calls were numerous. Feeble churches needed aid: the Indian mission, in consequence of the rise in exchange, required now nearly three times as much; the soldiers gladly read our tracts; then the living Word needed to be preached. He closed with an earnest appeal, and a glowing allusion to the influences of the times and the claims of the hour. The President then called on the Rev. Dr. Bellows, who, after some introductory remarks, said that there were great and striking changes going on. Men were breaking away from old opinions. There was a great work for us to do. We could reach many which others could not; therefore we need not engage in the labour in any narrow, sectarian spirit. In performing our duties we need not run counter to what others were doing. With faith in great ideas and Liberal Christianity, we should give ourselves zealously to the cause. He asked if, as Christians, we were doing as much as we ought, considering our wealth, position, and influence? We do not accomplish as much in ecclesiastical as in other directions. Now, we can not work either through or with any of the large denominations. Liberal ideas are spreading faster than Christian ideas, and hence our mission was to sanctify the former by the spirit of the latter. Where we now influence one thousand we ought to influence one hundred thousand. He then spoke of California as an illustration of what we might do for the religious quickening of masses of men. We sent to San Francisco one of our greatest and best men as a missionary. The influence of this single man was wide spread. Mr. King was peculiarly adapted to California, and the time he went was favourable. California was settled by an earnest, energetic class of men. These required an able and effective ministry. As yet they were not fixed in their opinions, and were ready to hear a strong voice. Many had never attended Unitarian preaching. This class were drawn by Mr. King into his church. His congregation was made up of persons from all denominations, and of every form of opinion. He reached their wants and touched their hearts. After four years of labour, he collected probably the largest Unitarian congregations in the world, two-thirds of which were men.

Among these were those who had the shaping of opinion, and led in all business and benevolent enterprises. His congregation, therefore, needed a minister of special gifts. As a whole, San Francisco at present had not a sufficient number of churches for the people. He would not disparage other sects. They were working in the cause of religion, but there was a large number outside their influence which we could reach. We ought to send men, tracts, and newspapers there. It would be a mistake to suppose the people in that section were ignorant and uncultivated. There were more graduates of colleges in San Francisco, according to its population, than in Boston. While he was there he found every faculty of soul and body tasked as never before. Next, the speaker considered the special duties of Unitarians. They ought to send some one to work with Mr. Stebbins, who was now settled in San Francisco. He was in danger of being overworked, just as Mr. King was. Dr. Bellows here bore testimony to the efficiency of Mr. Stebbins' services. He had also heard, since his return, of their appreciation by the people. But he ought not to be left alone in the tremendous work before him. He mentioned seven places in which he thought we could begin with reasonable prospect of success. At Sacramento there were twenty Unitarian families. Then there were Stockton, Marysville, Virginia City in Nevada, Portland in Oregon. In the latter place he had met with several families who were eager to hear the Word. We had no idea of the deep yearning for our pulpit ministrations which those had who were in this new country away from their old home and all its sacred associations. They would listen with tearful eyes. Never before had he valued his faith as when he saw with what intense interest and deep longing they listened to the dispensation of Liberal Christianity. Dr. Bellows then spoke of the specific work the Unitarians had in this magnificent country. First we should circulate our tracts and newspapers. In San Francisco, and other central places, we ought to have a large collection of our publications, so that those coming in from the interior might get them, and thus scatter them broadcast through the land. In one or two places he thought we might have self-supporting societies at once. There was a great deal to encourage us, and he was confident if good men were sent there, they would in two years be at the head of large societies. The Pacific coast had great resources. There would be a large increase of population, and the field promised a rich harvest. Moreover, a decided success on a large scale there would strengthen and encourage us at home.

The Rev. W. J. Potter, of New Bedford, made a stirring and thoughtful speech, in which he dwelt on the existence of slavery in many of the States as a barrier to the progress of Liberal Christianity, and mentioned the remarkable fact, that so long as slavery was dominant in the Southern States, Unitarianism had scarcely gained a foot-hold. With the progress of freedom Southward he believed that cause would advance in the same direction. Several other clergymen and laymen spoke, and resolutions were adopted, affirming the auspiciousness of the present juncture for spreading their views of Christian truth, recommending the appointment of Committees in the different Congregations to raise funds, and de-

claring that one hundred thousand dollars should be raised for this purpose during the current year.

OPENING OF NEW UNITARIAN CHURCH, DEVONPORT.

On Sunday, November 27, the new and beautiful church erected by the Unitarians of Devonport, Devonshire, was opened for public worship. A dedicatory service took place in the morning, conducted by the minister of the Congregation, the Rev. J. K. Applebee. The morning service followed, in which the Revs. J. H. Knott, of Plymouth, and W. J. Odgers, of Bath, took part; and the sermon was preached by the Rev. W. James, of Bristol, from Romans xii. 1—"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, which is your reasonable service." After briefly referring to the writings of St. Paul, and the connexion of the text with the previous chapter, he proceeded to dwell on the dedication of temples to the worship of God. He said, the best dedication of the outward structure would be found in the sincere homage, the humble spirit, the Christian behaviour, of those who frequented the services. The blessing of God rested not upon the walls within which prayer was offered, but upon the heads and hearts of those who earnestly and sincerely sought Him. The reality of His presence was indicated now by no external symbol—no shrine or altar—but was felt by the pure and humble soul. They came not to-day with processions and ceremonies—with imposing observances and costly oblations—to hallow the place which was henceforth to be employed for the highest purposes. They remembered that they were disciples of Him who had instructed them that God is a Spirit, and that worship, in order to be approved of by Him, must be offered in spirit and in truth. They breathed around no incense but that of supplication and praise. They wanted no oil for its anointing—no priest to recite a ritual of lustration; for they knew that it could only be made holy by the pure in heart, who would here behold God. The rev. gentleman then remarked upon the desirability and necessity of spiritual worship amongst those who revered the Almighty, and without which all other worship would avail nothing towards their salvation. In conclusion, he said that Unitarians had no fixed creeds to which they could direct the inquirer. They were a community of free and independent minds. They acknowledged no master in religion but Jesus Christ, whose name their Church would bear. They believed in one God the Father, one God in one person, not in three persons; one mind, one intelligence, one absolute, eternal, almighty, infinitely wise, just, and good God. This truth appeared to them to be inscribed on the volume of nature, and unfolded in the pages of revelation: to be at once the leading principle of Judaism and the glory of the Gospel. As they interpreted the Scriptures, "the Lord our God is one Lord, and He alone is to be worshipped." And they believed also in Jesus Christ, not as God the Son, but as the Son of God; not simply as a model man or an excellent example, not to be coupled with geniuses and sages, not as one who operated according to his own intentions and

suggestions, but as a preacher commissioned by God to declare His truth, to be a manifestation of the Divine to the human, to give assurance of pardon and immortality, to unbar the portals of the tomb, and to enable the spirit in its celestial ascent to sing as it soars—"Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord." They believed that sin is the greatest evil, but that man can become guilty only by his own transgression, and that, however low he may fall, he is capable of rising with Christ towards the Divine image, and that he is aided in his efforts to repentance and holiness by influence from above, which is drawn, not from a separate person of the Godhead, but the spirit of grace from the Father. They regarded salvation not as a work done for us, but in the soul by the change which Christianity produces, and Christ as the medium of the change which God, by the life and doctrine and death of his Son, accomplishes. Heaven they contemplated not as a blessing obtained on our behalf by another, but as a state of mind and heart which our religion, through the favour of God, helps us to gain for ourselves, and which we carry with us when we leave the present scene to be enlarged for ever—not as the abode of few or many, but as the common home of all in every clime who, according to their light, have been faithful. Hell was not to them a dreary domain of an unconquerable fear of God, the abode of endless torments and irremediable misery, but as a condition of righteous and merciful retribution—the awful reaping of that which has been sown in the flesh—punishment which follows sin, suffering that must continue until the evil that has produced it is destroyed. And when all enemies are subdued to the sway of Christ, and every form of evil overcome, then shall the Son also be himself subjected to Him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. The Bible they received as the word of Divine revelation—a word in which God speaks to the soul, but did not guide the pen of the sacred writers—a work which does not pretend to the precision of science, nor the accuracy of exact definition, and whose real import is only to be gained by looking beyond the letter to the spirit, and comparing and explaining what is obscure or figurative by what is clear and intelligible. He hoped that the church would be successful in the object for which it was dedicated—the worship of one God, and the Christian instruction of the people—and that the minister would also be blessed with success.

After sermon a collection was taken up and the service was closed by the Rev. J. K. Applebee.

At three o'clock a congregational meeting was held, at which Sir John Bowring presided; and in the evening the Rev. W. J. Odgers, of Bath, preached to a very large congregation.

ADDRESS TO THE LORD-LIEUTENANT FROM THE NON-SUBSCRIBING PRESBYTERIANS OF IRELAND.

On Tuesday, December 27, a deputation from this body presented an address to the Lord-Lieutenant at the Viceregal Lodge. The following gentlemen composed the deputation:—Rev. J. Scott Por-

ter, President; Rev. H. Moore, Secretary; Rev. G. A. Armstrong; Rev. D. D. Jeremy; John Barton, Esq.; P. M. Taylor, Esq.; J. Haughton, Esq., J.P.; J. Young, Esq.; and N. S. Gray, Esq. The Rev. J. S. Porter read the address as follows:—

"TO HIS EXCELLENCY, JOHN BARON WODEHOUSE, LORD-LIEUTENANT-GENERAL AND GENERAL GOVERNOR OF IRELAND.

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY.—We have the honour to appear before your Excellency as a deputation from the Association of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterians of Ireland, comprising four ecclesiastical bodies, distinct in jurisdiction, but united in adherence to the fundamental principles of the Reformation, viz., the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, the right of private judgment, and the rejection of human authority in matters of faith. In their name, we humbly beg leave to tender to your Excellency our congratulations on your appointment by Her Gracious Majesty to the high office of Chief Governor over this part of the British Empire. Aware of the distinction with which your Excellency has filled various high offices of trust in Her Majesty's service, and convinced of your Excellency's desire to promote the peace, happiness, and improvement of our native land, we cordially recognise the wisdom of Her Majesty's choice, and anticipate the happiest effects from your Excellency's administration. Inflexible in our assertion of the sacred rights of conscience for ourselves and the churches committed to our care, we feel ourselves bound by honour, consistency, and duty, to acknowledge in the amplest measure the same rights in our fellow-subjects of every creed; and, therefore, we shall always have peculiar pleasure in using whatever influence we possess for the support of an enlightened, impartial, and truly Christian policy, which, extending equal protection to all sects and denominations, and declining to confer exceptional or exclusive privileges upon the adherents of any Church, can alone tend to unite the wise and liberal of all parties in respect for the Government under which we live, and in harmony amongst themselves. Under your Excellency's Government we trust to see those principles strenuously carried into action in reference to the reform and administration of the law, and more especially in reference to public education, with respect to which we cannot conceal our opinion that they have lately, in some important points, been lost sight of. We trust your Excellency will always have cause to represent us to Her Gracious Majesty as peaceable, dutiful, and loving subjects, inflexible in our attachment to the Constitution, deeply grateful for the large measure of civil and religious liberty which we enjoy under her benignant sway, and and anxious to promote, on all occasions, loyalty to the Throne, obedience to the laws, and mutual good-will amongst our fellow-subjects of every denomination."

HIS EXCELLENCY replied as follows:—

"GENTLEMEN,—As representative of the Queen, I receive with pleasure your loyal and dutiful address; and on my part I sincerely thank you for the kind expressions in which you have conveyed to me the congratulations of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterians on my assumption of the office of Lord-Lieutenant. I rejoice to hear your declarations, that whilst you maintain your own rights of

conscience, you feel bound to acknowledge the same rights in your fellow-subjects of every creed. I trust that your efforts to promote loyalty to the Throne, obedience to the laws, and mutual good-will amongst Irishmen of every religious denomination, may be attended with the success which such truly Christian labours deserve."

The deputation then withdrew.

CONGREGATIONAL SOIREE AT RALOO.

A soiree was held in the Raloo Non-Subscribing Meeting-house, on Friday evening, the 16th December. The meeting, which was in every respect a highly pleasant one, bore testimony to the friendly feeling which exists among the various religious bodies of that neighbourhood, there being present on the occasion members of the Established, the Presbyterian, and the Roman Catholic Churches, all evincing a kindly feeling towards their Non-Subscribing brethren. Amongst the clergymen present were—the Revs. C. Porter, Larne; M. Getty, Moderator of the Remonstrant Synod; J. Hall, Ballyclare; W. J. Smyth, Carrickfergus. The Rev. T. Smyth (minister of the congregation) being called to the chair, the following sentiments were proposed:—"The Progress of Freedom," responded to by the Rev. J. Hall; "The Non-Subscribing Churches," by Rev. M. Getty; "Education, Religious and Secular," by Rev. W. J. Smyth; "Our Brethren of all Religious Denominations," by Mr. S. Blair; "Thanks to the Ladies who so kindly presided at the tables, and so tastefully decorated the house," by Mr. R. Cobain; "The Stewards," by Mr. J. Adrain. The Rev. C. Porter addressed the meeting, referring to the active part he had taken in the formation of Raloo Congregation thirty years ago, and expressing the feeling of affection which still bound him to those members of it who had once been his parishioners.

BELFAST DOMESTIC MISSION.

Two highly interesting examinations of the religious classes in connexion with the Domestic Mission took place lately. The first, of the children in the National School, Stanhope Street, on Tuesday, December 13. The other, of the Model School children, on Friday, December 16. All these classes are under the superintendance of Rev. T. Bowring, who, under the sanction of the Educational Board, meets the pupils of each school respectively, once in the week, for the purpose of imparting Scriptural knowledge. The Stanhope Street children were examined in the presence of members of the First and Second Unitarian Congregations, on the New Testament generally, and specially on the tenth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, whilst they had also prepared written answers to a series of questions on the twenty-fourth chapter of the same Gospel. The examination of the pupils of the Model School was conducted mainly by the Rev. J. Scott Porter, who searchingly questioned them on the ninth chapter of St. John's Gospel, whilst written answers were furnished by the majority on the last chapter of John. The children in both schools acquitted themselves both

orally and in writing, to the entire satisfaction of the friends that were present, whilst it is to be hoped that the effects will prove permanently beneficial on the minds and hearts of those whose highest good is sought in the instruction given. A number of premiums, for punctuality of attendance and general proficiency, were distributed, in each case, at the close of the proceedings.

OBITUARY.

Died, at Paisley, on November 24th, James Melvin, only child of the late Mr. Matthew Scott, of Girvan, aged 2 years.

Died, on Sunday, 4th December, at his residence, 31, Eccles Street, Dublin, in the 83rd year of his age, John Strong Armstrong, Esq., formerly of Ballynahinch, County Down, third son of the late John Armstrong, Esq., of that place, and only surviving brother of the lamented Dr. Armstrong, late minister of Strand Street, Dublin. In his religious convictions, Mr. Armstrong, like his father and brother, was a strict Bible Christian, and a decided Unitarian, and, being by birth, parentage, and choice, a Presbyterian—having formerly acted for several years as a ruling elder of the First Presbyterian Congregation of Ballynahinch, of which his maternal grandfather, the Rev. John Strong, had been the venerated minister when that Congregation was distinguished as holding what were then known as "New Light" principles,—he ever remained strongly attached to the simple forms of the Church of his ancestors. During his long residence in Dublin, he was a well-known, regular, and influential member of the Strand Street Unitarian Congregation. He was married to Emily, second daughter of the late Rev. Dr. Bruce, of Belfast, a lady of the most amiable manners and exemplary piety, but of whom, unhappily, he was deprived by death at an early period. Mr. Armstrong took peculiar pleasure in historical researches, and possessed a singularly clear and retentive memory in genealogical lore and local events. He was universally respected for his gentlemanly bearing, unassuming manners, strict integrity, and kindness of heart. His life, which was regulated by Christian principle and moral duty, was consistent, honourable, and upright; and his memory will ever be held in esteem by many attached friends who knew and appreciated his moral worth.

Died, on the morning of Wednesday, the 7th December, 1864, Mary, widow of the late James Campbell, Esq., of Donegall Square, Belfast, formerly of Silversprings, in the County of Antrim, aged 80 years.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Erratum.—In the fourth stanza of "Quench not the Spirit," in last number, p. 375, last line but one, for "many" read "Mary."

Orders for the work and business communications to be sent to the Agent of the Unitarian Society, 45, Arthur Street, Belfast.

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